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ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE  
COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
OF  
RHODE ISLAND,  
MADE TO THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY,  
AT THE  
JANUARY SESSION, 1856,  
BY  
ROBERT ALLYN,  
COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS,

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

# ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS.


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*To the Honorable General Assembly:—*

I have the honor herewith to present to your honorable body the Statistics of our Public Schools, as far as they have been returned to me by the School-Committees of the several towns; and the several accounts of moneys expended for the support of the Indigent Deaf Mutes, the Blind and Idiotic youth, and the account of current expenses for the State Normal School; as well as some statements concerning the condition and progress of Public Education in our Commonwealth, together with plans and suggestions for the improvement of the common schools in our midst, as the law makes it my duty at this time to do.

## SUMMARY OF EXPENSES.

The amount of money disbursed by the State to the several towns for the support of common schools, is	\$49,994 17
The amount raised by the Towns by their own votes, is	\$62,564 89



The amount received by Towns from Registry and Military taxes, is	\$7,923 41
The amount received from Rate Bills and District taxes, is	\$11,721 11
The amount received by the towns from the income of other Funds, is	\$1,991 03
The amount of money remaining in the town treasuries from last year's funds, is	\$4,418 23
The amount expended on School Houses, in building or repairs, is	\$16,001 56
Making the total, raised and appropriated, for Common Schools throughout the State,	\$154,614 40
Of this sum there was expended for the support of schools and the building and repairing of school houses,	\$147,676 64
Leaving on the first of May last a balance in the several treasuries of the towns of	\$6,937 76
The tables hereto annexed also show that there was expended for Instruction alone, in our Common Schools,	\$131,675 08
The amount of money ordered to be paid for the support of the Deaf Mutes at the American Asylum, in Hartford, is	\$483 33
The amount ordered to be paid for the support of Blind, at the Massachusetts Asylum, and Perkins Institution for the Blind, is	\$000 00
For the Idiotic and Feeble-minded Youth with Dr. Howe, of Boston, and Dr. Browne. of Barre, is	\$250 00
The amount paid out for Lectures in different parts of the State, is	\$500 00
The amount paid for Teachers Institutes in Tiverton and Scituate, is	\$300 00
The sum paid for the Rent of Rooms, Instruction, and for Books for the State Normal School, in Providence, is	\$3,921 13

And for Apparatus for the same School, \$300 00

Accounts of the items of these last expenditures have been filed with the General Treasury, as the law directs.

It will be seen by the above, that the expense of the system of Public Instruction to the State, exclusive of the Salary of the Commissioner, and the incidental expenses of his office, are \$160,368 86

But a balance now remains in the town-treasuries, of \$6,937 76

Making the actual cost of our School System, for the year ending May 1, 1855, \$153,431 10

#### SUMMARY OF STATISTICS.

The total number of scholars attending the public schools is 26,883.

While the total number of children of the school age, or between the ages of 4 and 15, is calculated to be 39,011.

The average number of scholars attending school is only 18,998.

The cost of instructing a scholar is then \$4 90 on the average throughout the State.

And the cost of a scholar, according to the average attendance, is \$6 93, which is a discount of almost 29 1-3 per cent, or a loss of that per cent on account of absences, the vast majority of which are entirely unnecessary.

The number of teachers employed in the State is 679; 275 males, 404 females.

And the average of their wages is, for males, \$33 65, including board; and for females, including board \$17 96.

The number of Districts in the State is 384.

And the number of School Houses, 378.



## SIGNS OF PROGRESS.

The Statistics of the Schools, reported to the Commissioner by the respective School-Committees of the several towns in the State, afford abundant evidence to show that the common school system of the State is more and more highly appreciated by the community. The sums raised by the towns are every year steadily increasing. Against \$62,564 89 raised by vote during 1854, for the support of schools during the school-year, ending May 1, 1855, the towns voted to raise \$77,004 89, for their portion of the money to support their children at school the year ending May 1, 1856, which is an increase of \$14,440 00. The number of scholars in school is also greater by 1,015 ; but the average attendance is less by 906, a fact for which it is difficult to account.

This shows a much greater disposition to appropriate money for the improvement of the schools, than to send the children to take advantage of this increased liberality. The amount of money voted will, however, be found a very accurate index of the growing interest in the great work of education ; and out of this praise-worthy disposition to enlarge the means of diffusing knowledge, there must soon grow up, in a community proverbially economical as ours is, a conscientious determination to reap all the benefits legitimately expected from the additional outlay.

Other symptoms of awakening interest are found in the more frequently made inquiries, on the part of parents and trustees, after better educated teachers, and in the enthusiasm evidently rising among teachers to become better prepared for the exalted duties of their profession, as well as in the annually growing number of young men and young women, who are seeking to make the business of teaching a life-work.

Each of these signs of improvement are to be accepted as full of encouragement. They show a deepening conviction

on the part of the people, that a public education, founded on morality and virtue, is a matter not only of national safety, but a subject of honorable national pride.

An estimate of the number of children of the school-age—that is, between 4 and 15—in the State, shows it probable that there are 39,011 children who are expected to be in the Public Schools; and yet our reported statistics show that only 26,883 have attended school in the schools supported by the funds, or only about 69 per cent, while the average of attendance is only 48 2-3 per cent.

It may be said that the estimate of children of the school-age is too large, inasmuch as the population of our State has not increased at so rapid a rate since, as before 1850. In reply to this, it should be said that the estimate was made before the census of the City of Providence was officially made known, and the number in that city is taken in the table as less than the actual count. The towns in the immediate vicinity of Providence have undoubtedly increased in a much larger ratio than the estimate allows.—For example, the town of North Providence actually shows an attendance of pupils in its Public Schools larger than the estimate. It is therefore believed that the estimate, though not exact as to particular towns, will be found very near the truth in reference to the whole State.

It will also be said, and much weight should attach to the remark, that many of the children between the ages of 4 and 15 are in private schools. While this is true, and serves to diminish the amount of “that barbarism growing up in our midst, by reason of the many who never attend school, or learn to read,” it, by no means, speaks well for the democratic spirit of our citizens, or for the ability of common schools to educate the whole population. For if the whole number of children able to be in public school is not present, it must be inferred either that the parents lack the true public spirit to avail themselves of the means of educating their children provided by the people, and open

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to their common use ; or that the schools themselves are still unfit for some classes of the community—for the rich and refined, or for the poor and destitute. The first named class may find, or pretend to find them unfit on account of the small number of branches of learning introduced, the meager discipline obtained, and the unskillful manner in which their children are taught, or on account of the rude and uncouth manners there acquired, and the vicious and degrading influences of those with whom the pupils are daily compelled to associate. The second class may urge that they are virtually excluded by reason of the high price of rate bills and books, or by reason of the select character of the studies, the too exclusive attention to the higher branches, or by reason of the shame which children poorly clad are apt to feel in the presence of those who are well-dressed. It is believed, however, that in our community it is, in truth, neither of these reasons that keep the children from the public schools. For the course of instruction will readily adapt itself to the scholars who come. If these are advanced and prepared for the study of the higher branches, these latter can be taught well and efficiently.—On the other hand, if the scholars are ignorant and backward, the course of instruction, by a necessary law, lowers itself to their capacities and standard. And if children, who are well disciplined morally and trained in neat and virtuous habits at home, compose a majority of the school, and the parents, the School Committee, and the teacher are resolute in the performance of their duties, the school will necessarily become a nursery for similar habits and virtues. While it must be owned, with regret, that if the greater part of the pupils are of the opposite character, and the teacher be not something higher than can be reasonably expected of a human being, the school will be anything but a promoter of moral purity and virtue.

## CAUSES OF ABSENCE.

It is then a question of the utmost consequence to our community, why are not a greater number of the children of the State taught in the schools which the State supports? It cannot be, or need not be in the character of the schools themselves; if it were found to be in this, a single year's efforts by the virtuous and intelligent classes of the commonwealth, would make them almost all that could be desired, both as to the studies pursued and as to the moral influence they should exert on those who are in them. It cannot be that they are too high in character for the children of the poor, for if they were, others would readily be established the moment those in want of suitable schools should make the demand felt.

Undoubtedly no one separate and distinct cause can be assigned for the very great and alarming absence of our children from the Public Schools. To account for this we must look to a combination of causes, none of them such as positive law can remove, or even alleviate. The indifference and carelessness of parents and guardians is one very prominent cause, both of absences, and of irregularities in attendance—an evil little less damaging to the progress of a school than total absence. Again, the very profitableness of children's labor, and the necessity that, if these are engaged at all in labor, they shall be regular in the days and hours of their labor, has probably been a fruitful cause of absences, and of indifference to the means of education.—This cause in the rural districts withdraws boys from the Summer schools at a very early age, and by compelling them to do many of the chores in winter, has contributed to increase the irregularities shown by the School Registers.—In cities and in manufacturing villages this same cause operates to withdraw all the the children, or nearly all, from the school at an early age, so that in some of these places it is impossible to find a child in school above the age of

twelve or thirteen. Besides these causes, the incompetence of teachers and the repulsiveness with which a few still contrive to clothe the school-room, tend to make children invent excuses for absence, and to multiply truantries to an alarming degree. Too little effort is expended to make the school-house and school exercises pleasant. It is with this as with *duty*, which many good people place in sharp and glaring contrast to all kinds of pleasure. And so many parents and teachers sit down contented, to think that because school has never yet been made a delightful spot, or its labors desirable, and because of its indisputable utility, therefore, it cannot, and in fact, need not be stripped of its lonesomeness, and of its dull and tiresome terrors. Truantries, hence, increase: children seek, and their parents embrace, opportunities to abandon altogether the place they so much dread.

#### WHAT ARE THE REMEDIES.

These almost inaccessible causes of absence and irregularities do, nevertheless, eat away the substance of our benefactions to our schools, and destroy, in the bud, much of both the beauty and profit of that harvest, which we have a right to expect from the seed so plentifully sown, by us beside all the waters. It is not legitimately within the province of law or legislative enactments wholly, or even partially, to remove them. They are found, like the impalpable malaria that sleeps beneath the wings of the breeze, far from the reach of the chemist's or the statesman's art. To remove them we must not seek them directly in the places where they seem to work, but in some remoter source. We must call public attention to their deadly influence, and awaken the community to an intelligent sense of their danger. We must discuss before the whole people, and beget in the public mind a thoughtful sense of the responsibilities resting on the present generation, obliging them, as they love their offspring, and seek

for their elevation and progress in everything good and noble, to see to it that every child be educated thoroughly—and educated, too, in the schools of the people.

For let us distinctly remember that, in a country like ours, founded upon the acknowledged equality and privileges of all mankind, there can be no permanent and long-continued prosperity, but in making the people, in some important sense, homogenous. Nothing can secure this but our system of common schools, and the legitimate operations of our common republican christianity, which is their foundation and support. Knowledge and virtue, joined with refinement and grace, are the greatest of agrarian levellers; levelling upward always—not downward, and ennobling also—bringing the son of the humblest and poorest, upon the platform with the richest and proudest. That nation, therefore, which educates its children in science and uprightness, will find, in a generation or two, that it will be a people, all of whom are kings in nobility of soul, and in elevation of sentiment.

In order, therefore, that the 48 2-3 per cent of our children, who are in our public schools, may best profit by their education, and in order that the community may obtain from this education the greatest benefit, it becomes a matter of high importance that the other 51 1-3 per cent also obtain their education at the same common source. It may be said that they obtain a better education elsewhere.—Grant that some of them, who are at the best and most costly private schools, do receive an education which is, in many respects, better; grant that in these private schools they are taught the higher branches, and the accomplishments which it would not be proper to introduce into our common schools; and these children are not so well fitted for the whole round of republican duties, as if a portion of their training had been in the schools of the people. But the great mass of this 51 1-3 either receive no education at all, or they receive it very inferior in quality, and very in-



financial in amount ; and the ignorance, which they thus nurse and diffuse among the others, works to the injury and detriment of every other member of the community. In a village where three-fourths are well-educated, and the other one-fourth are untaught, and therefore somewhat vicious, every one of the well-educated pays a yearly tax for his neighbor's misfortune, greater than if he had been annually compelled to support him at the public schools during the whole of his youth. It is the whole commonwealth that ignores and vice taxes, and nought but a common effort to educate, to moralize, and to render the community homogenous, and a unit in all its interests and sympathies can remove or sensibly lighten this alarming taxation.

#### SOME EVILS IN PRACTICE.

It may almost be said that our system of public education is nearly as perfect as legislation can make it. A few things might, with great profit, be added to our excellent school law, to prompt to and encourage a more thorough and uniform system of visitation of schools, and to mark out and continue in operation more uniformly the present plan of our State patronage of schools. Such suggestions are made elsewhere, and particular attention is asked for them. But in the main features of the system, nothing that promises greater usefulness seems desirable.

The most deeply felt want in our whole operations is the intelligent and earnest coöperation of the entire community. The State taxes all its citizens' property, to enable its officers to make the legally enacted appropriation to each town, for the maintenance of its common schools. And by law the voters of the particular town are empowered to expend that money for the benefit of their children, under the direction of a yearly elected school committee. Generally—perhaps as yet without an exception—this committee has been composed of men noted for good sense, probity, and public spirit, if not for rich and varied learning and ripe

experience. But a school committee alone cannot perform the whole task of providing good schools for a town, and save the community from the loss of more than half the money employed. The statistics of the present year show this most clearly.

The trustees must coöperate with, and not act against the school committee. Yet it can hardly be expected that men, elected by a small district, in a large town, will always be disposed to consult a distant body, and one upon which they, now and then, look with jealousy. Colisions will, therefore, now and then occur. In some instances a teacher will be employed and put into the school by the trustee, on the supposition that no certificate is needed, or that one will be easily obtained at the time of visitation. An incompetent person is therefore introduced into the school-room, and the committee must choose between a school kept by him, or a neighborhood quarrel. Some of these cases are owing to the heedlessness of the trustees, and to their ignorance of the law. Others are owing to their independent and reckless spirit. During the past year the Commissioner has issued a circular in reference to this subject, explaining the law, and calling attention to the fact that any officer who pays, or draws an order, for the wages of a teacher, for time during which he has no certificate, renders himself liable to prosecution and fine. It is hoped that the attention of the public may be aroused to this very fruitful source of perplexity, and that in future it may be avoided.

But occasionally a more serious cause of disturbance occurs. After a committee has, for some good cause, as appears to them, denied a certificate of qualifications to a teacher, the teacher or trustees have obtained from a County Inspector a certificate, and he has entered upon the work of instructing the very school which the committee refused him; thus setting at nought the authority of the men elected by the whole town to control the schools, and attempt-

ing to evade the provisions of the laws of the State. This practice cannot be too severely condemned, and the person so attempting to set at nought the lawful authority of the guardians of the interests and morality of the schools of a town, certainly proves himself unworthy of the office of an instructor of youth. He is creeping into an office of the greatest dignity and sacredness, by a species of low and reprehensible trickery, and teaching by example, ere he begins his duties of exacting obedience to rules, that it is allowable, and even boast-worthy, to evade any rule, regulation, or law, that stands between himself and the object of his desire. How dares such an one to ask a scholar to obey his authority, when he regards neither the rules of the town nor the law of the State? And how can a community allowing it, expect to see their children growing up in the love of honor and fair open dealing among men? Such an indefensible procedure deserves the severe denunciation of the whole commonwealth. And yet it is believed that no penalty could be contrived that would be useful in bringing it into disrepute. It needs only to be known to be discredited, and driven from the community.

#### A REMEDY SUGGESTED.

A remedy for these evils and many others might be found in the 19th Section of the school law, which provides that each town may manage its schools by the school committee, without the intervention of trustees. Were this the case, every district of the town would have the benefit of the counsels of the best men in the whole town; while under the system of district-trustees, some sections may be unfortunately located in respect to men, who are willing to undertake the office of trustee, and perform its duties. Were the town to manage all its district schools thus, by a central board or committee, there could be no possibility of a collision between those who hire the teachers and those who examine the candidates and visit the schools. The visitors

would then always be informed of the times when the schools commence and close, and would feel more strictly bound to be present and discharge their very important duties as visitors and examiners. There would be less opportunity to favor relatives, and to foster petty neighborhood feuds, than under the present system of hiring by means of trustees. And, finally, the several parts of the town, and the children of all the parents would enjoy more nearly equal privileges, by a better distribution of the teachers, as to abilities and talents, than they can enjoy under any other system whatever.

Several of the towns have already adopted this practice, and it is believed that others would at once do, so if they had the means of knowing its advantages. It would avoid many of the serious jealousies, now arising between the people of a district and the school committee, or between the teachers and committee; and could not fail to secure a much wiser outlay of the public money, as well as greater efficiency in the administration of the whole system. The subject is commended to the intelligent consideration of the people of the State; for in the truest spirit of the principles of a self-governing community, the law leaves the whole matter in their hands.

#### VISITATION OF SCHOOLS.

- Another thing in this connection deserves careful attention, and that is the visitation of schools. The law makes it the duty of the school committee and trustees to visit the school, at least, twice during each four months of its continuation. But an examination of the several school registers, in schools which he has visited during the year, has convinced the Commissioner that this duty is sometimes neglected by both these officers; and some conversation on the subject, with teachers and others, has tended to deepen the conviction, that there is here a great lack of official faithfulness. These visits are in very many cases made in-

telligently and efficiently, and greatly to the profit of the schools, with no remuneration or thanks, though the expense may be considerable, and the inconvenience great.— But in others, where the visit is made, it is so hurried, and is so completely a silent one, that it does no good, and is, in fact, nearly a farce. The visitor ought to be paid a reasonable sum for his services, and then he should be expected to make his visits worth something to the teacher and to the school, by the suggestions that he shall make in questions and remarks, by the intelligent interest he shall manifest and awaken, as well as by the dignity with which he shall invest the whole round of school life and duties.

#### CARELESS AND ERRONEOUS STATISTICS.

But one of the most serious evils in the administration of our school system, is in the manner of collecting our statistics. While accurate and well-digested statistical tables are among the most valuable auxiliaries to any enterprise, that promises or seeks improvement, those which are carelessly collected are the most perplexing, and the most bewildering. And in a system like that of our school system, if we cannot have the statistics of scholars and attendance correctly given, we cannot, of course, know either its defects or its excellencies, or guess at the proper mode of remedying the one, or increasing the other. This matter lies mostly with school committees, and they can secure attention to an important and very much needed reform in this whole subject. As it is, their returns are often very meager, and in some cases evidently and grossly inaccurate.— Attention should be turned to this matter, and it is hoped that in future much more time will be spent in collecting and in verifying the statistics of our common schools. No just distribution of the public money can be made by the school committee to the several districts without these are full, explicit, and accurate; and no correct and valuable

conclusions can be drawn by the Commissioner, or by the legislative authorities, without them.

With our system of teachers, committees and boards of trustees—each made responsible for a small portion of every table of returns, and neither having the power to compare the accuracy of the others' work with his own, or with the original sources whence it was derived—too many persons are now made responsible for these statistics to insure prompt and reliable accuracy; the returns required are too cumbersome, and public officers are too poorly paid to induce them to spend much time, and give explicit thought to the subject. It is a matter of the deepest interest, therefore, to the State, to have this point thoroughly canvassed before its citizens. It is hoped, that when attention is called to it, the good sense of the inhabitants of each town will suggest to them the importance that attaches to it, and the proper method of providing a remedy for the evils complained of.

#### BALANCES IN TOWN TREASURIES.

It will be seen by the returns in table No. 2, that there remains in the treasuries of the several towns, a balance of \$6,936 76. This in some towns has been increasing for several years. One town has annually, for four years, reserved a sum nearly equal to the amount which it raises by tax to secure its share of the State's appropriation, till now the balance in its treasury is of considerable consequence, and becomes a subject for speculation as to the interest that can be obtained for it, to assist in defraying the other expenses of the town. A single district in another town had, at the beginning of this school year, about a thousand dollars, standing to its credit on the books of the school committee. This course of retaining, by calculation, a large balance in the town treasuries, is believed to be both unwise and contrary to the spirit of the school law.

The State awards its annual portion of money raised by

tax, to each town with the expectation that each town will in good faith collect by tax, a given sum to increase the amount; and with this will support its public schools for the coming year. Can it be considered an honest and a fair compliance with the conditions imposed, for a town to raise its portion, not to expend on, and thus improve its schools, but to be hired out from year to year? The school law allows any sum remaining to the credit of any district at the end of the year, to be divided among the remaining districts, the next year; and does not this indicate that the State, as a general rule, expects that the monies, granted and raised, shall be used in the support and improvement of public schools, during the year immediately succeeding? By such a course as this a town cannot improve its schools, and a policy so manifestly avaricious, and Shylock-like, as farming out the money intended for its children's education, can work no other result than unmodified injury. The attention of the people is called to this important subject; not for the purpose of suggesting any legislation, but in order to lay before them the necessity for constant watchfulness, in reference to their privileges as well as their duties. It is thought that the exposure of the practice will correct the evil, which is not very wide-spread. .

The above are believed to be the chief points to which attention should be called, as needing more care and more zeal in carrying out our excellent common school system. It cannot be a matter of indifference with any class in our community, neither with the tax-payers, nor the parents, neither with those who have children, nor with those who have not, as to whether the large sum, now paid for school purposes, shall be virtually squandered, or negligently and inefficiently expended. We expend enough each year, if it were all carefully laid out, to procure for our children an excellent common school education. It is for the voters in the several districts in most of the towns, to say whether this shall be so used as to secure that result. No State en-

actments, no recommendations made by commissioners, no supervision forced upon them, can compel a people to act wisely, thoughtfully, and for the best interests of those children, who are dearer to them than life itself.

#### TEACHERS' INSTITUTES.

The Teachers' Institutes, authorized to be held annually, were held during the last Autumn—the one at Tiverton Four Corners, and the other at North Scituate, and each of them was highly profitable, both to the teachers and to the friends of education who attended them. That held in Tiverton numbered thirty-eight—seventeen males and twenty-one females. That held in Scituate numbered one hundred and twenty-nine—fifty-nine males and seventy females.

The exercises at these gatherings of teachers consisted of reviews of school studies, exercises after the manner of the daily recitations, and drills suitable to be given each day in the school-room. Lectures and public Addresses on the various modes and forms of giving instruction, and securing the attention of pupils, and on the motives and appliances to be used in stimulating children to love knowledge, and form themselves to habits of due obedience and order, were given by several gentlemen of distinguished ability, and were of that practical and eminently useful kind, that could not fail to leave a deep and a profitable impression on the minds of all teachers whose good fortune it was to hear them. It is believed that no money which the State expends for the benefit of its schools accomplishes a better service than that appropriated to defray the expenses of these Institutes.

A difficulty is likely to occur in the mode of conducting these Teachers' Institutes. We cannot reasonably expect to be able to hold more than two, or at most three, annually. And these ought to be held in the most convenient time in Autumn. But it is often found impossible to engage the most accomplished teachers and lecturers, because our



tax, to each town with the expectation that each town will in good faith collect by tax, a given sum to increase the amount; and with this will support its public schools for the coming year. Can it be considered an honest and a fair compliance with the conditions imposed, for a town to raise its portion, not to expend on, and thus improve its schools, but to be hired out from year to year? The school law allows any sum remaining to the credit of any district at the end of the year, to be divided among the remaining districts, the next year; and does not this indicate that the State, as a general rule, expects that the monies, granted and raised, shall be used in the support and improvement of public schools, during the year immediately succeeding? By such a course as this a town cannot improve its schools, and a policy so manifestly avaricious, and Shylock-like, as farming out the money intended for its children's education, can work no other result than unmodified injury. The attention of the people is called to this important subject; not for the purpose of suggesting any legislation, but in order to lay before them the necessity for constant watchfulness, in reference to their privileges as well as their duties. It is thought that the exposure of the practice will correct the evil, which is not very wide-spread. .

The above are believed to be the chief points to which attention should be called, as needing more care and more zeal in carrying out our excellent common school system. It cannot be a matter of indifference with any class in our community, neither with the tax-payers, nor the parents, neither with those who have children, nor with those who have not, as to whether the large sum, now paid for school purposes, shall be virtually squandered, or negligently and inefficiently expended. We expend enough each year, if it were all carefully laid out, to procure for our children an excellent common school education. It is for the voters in the several districts in most of the towns, to say whether this shall be so used as to secure that result. No State en-

actments, no recommendations made by commissioners, no supervision forced upon them, can compel a people to act wisely, thoughtfully, and for the best interests of those children, who are dearer to them than life itself.

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Institutes promise them only a small remuneration for a couple of weeks, while they can secure a much larger contract elsewhere, at even larger wages. At these model schools, as they may be termed, however, none but the best examples should be placed before the teachers. Besides, lectures on some of the simpler and practical parts of the Philosophy of the mind might be profitably introduced, and made to communicate to teachers, many of the important principles of those laws which govern the acquisition and retention of knowledge, as well as the methods of imparting it. These remarks indicate that it may be best, for the interests of all concerned, either to modify the manner of conducting the Institutes, diminish their number, or increase the appropriation to defray their expenses. Perhaps the second course may be the wisest on the whole, since, as more of our teachers take advantage of the privileges offered at the State Normal School, there will be less need of a large number of Institutes.

#### IMPROVEMENT OF TEACHERS.

If our schools are to be kept in a good condition, and to progress from year to year, they must have good teachers. And these teachers must every year become more and more skilful, as well as more learned. There can be no such thing as standing still, on the part of our schools. If they do not partake, with all branches of business and science around them, of the common impulse and law, and move on, at a pace commensurate with the progress of all else that is good, they must, very soon, fall behind the wants and demands of the community, and be discarded. But in spite of the increasing attention paid to schools by the legislation of a State; in spite of the increased interest felt by parents and guardians, in the welfare of the schools at which the children of our population attend; in spite of all the labor and study, expended in writing, printing and speaking on this most popular topic—education; if the

teacher cannot be made to feel the need of constant progression on his part, and of higher and nobler attainments each year in his profession, the schools cannot long maintain their hold on the affections of the people. "As is the teacher, so will be the school," is a maxim as true now as when Pestolozzi first said it.

To keep the teachers, therefore, on the road of progressive improvement, in their own personal character and habits, they must, like any other profession, be able to have frequent meetings, for discussing among themselves, the great principles that lie at the foundation of success in their work. They must often, or at least sometimes, be brought in contact with the leading minds engaged in the same holy calling, and drink in their spirit. They must, in some way or other, be enabled to see new methods tried, and to hear new theories, if such there be, propounded and examined. They must not always read, and study, and experiment in solitude; but must come into personal contact with others, and learn how they have studied, what they have read, and how their experiments have succeeded or failed. All these things are absolutely necessary to keep a teacher's heart and soul alive, and interested in the work to which he is devoting his energies, and to which he ought to contribute something of improvement.

#### MEETINGS OF TEACHERS.

In order to do this, teachers must have opportunities of frequent and elevating intercourse with each other. And paid, as they are, so insufficient wages, and laboring so entirely, as they do, for the advantage of the State, it is but just and proper that the State should meet a large share of the expense of their gatherings. This has been the spirit which has governed this Legislature in making the annual appropriation for the Teachers' Institutes, and no one questions, but that even a larger sum, expended for this same purpose, would be still more profitable.

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It appears no more than right, and certainly it is profitable, for a State that has by law taken the task of educating its children, at least partially, into its own hands, to take also the oversight, if no more, of the training of the teachers whom it is to employ for that precious work. The teacher needs a specific course of education, to enable him to enter upon his duties practically skilled in the best methods of performing them. And if the State could not be compelled to lose by his experiments upon his pupils in the school-room, while he is there acquiring this practical skill, it must find for him the means to gain it before he enters that sanctuary of the public hopes. There must be, therefore, provided for him a suitable place, with well-taught and intelligent instructors, and here he should be prepared by drills, and by trials of his own skill and patience in actual teaching-exercises, for what he is to do hereafter. By such a provision as this, the State will give to its teachers, even in their novitiates, nearly all the practical benefits of a wise and ripe experience in the school-room; and will give to them, what is, if possible, still better than learning, some great and practical safeguard against the temptations to discouragement, to despondency, and to injudicious and hasty measures, which so frequently beset the beginner in school-keeping, and which, if they do not drive him entirely from the profession, do impair his courage, and retard his progress it may be, for years. But with such a training as can be given, partly at least, at the expense of the State, he enters his school with confidence and proceeds with his work like one who has anticipated the trials and the duties, and has nerved himself to endure the one, and promptly and conscientiously to discharge the other. If thus trained in a professional school of teachers he is far more likely to make this business his calling for life, and to become more earnest and enthusiastic in the performance of the daily routine of its details. And whatever shall prevent this continual loss of influence and power, by the so frequent changes of teach-

ers, not only from place to place, but from the school-room to the counting-room or the shop, should be hailed as a noble good.

#### LOSSES FROM CHANGING TEACHERS.

It is a matter of unalloyed regret that the average time spent by teachers in their work is not in our State, as shown by inquiries answered during the last winter by nearly five hundred teachers more than about two years. They come from the schools at about the age of eighteen, and on the average when the time of twenty arrives they have departed to another sphere. Can we expect our schools to be places of dignity and state pride unless we find a speedy remedy for this incessant change of the instructors of our offspring? But the short space of time spent by any individual in the business of teaching is, by no means, the worst of the case. This little two years—two years of immature and inexperienced labor, is it not?—is frittered down almost to nothing, by making the teacher spend it in at least three different schools on the average. We thus secure in the same school a teacher for only about eight months at a time; and then he must resign his place to a stranger; the children must lose all the wisdom he had acquired, by his experience and work among them; and the hallowed associations of teacher, friend and honored guide must be dissolved, as the gorgeous promises of coolness and moisture made by a summer morning are dissipated by the fiery eye of the sun. It is to be hoped that the influence of the Normal School will be particularly beneficial in rendering our teachers' places not only more agreeable to them and more profitable to the community, but that it will also train and bind to the profession of teaching an able, an enterprising and a progressive class of men and women who shall consecrate their talents and energies to a life-duty in the service of the noblest of all callings—the Gospel ministry perhaps excepted.

## STATE NORMAL SCHOOL.

The success of the experiment in organizing and sustaining the State Normal School, in the city of Providence, has been very gratifying to the friends of the measure. The teachers have been models for their profession, and they have successfully accomplished a work for which they deserve the gratitude of the State. To S. S. Greene, A. M., now Professor in Brown University, whose activity and practical energy first demonstrated the feasibility of maintaining such a school in our midst, and to Dana P. Colburn, Esq., the present able Principal of the institution, every lover and promoter of sound popular education must render great praise. These gentlemen nobly volunteered to undertake the work of Normal Instruction, with no prospects of support beyond the voluntary—almost charitable—contributions of a few citizens of Providence whose wise foresight at once induced them to guarantee liberal aid to the project. The school thus sustained for two successive seasons, was then adopted by the State and placed on a permanent basis.

It went into operation on the 29th day of May, 1854, and has since that time been well patronized, and highly useful. During the last Autumn Mr. A. Sumner, who had been connected with the institution as an Assistant teacher, was compelled, by illness, to resign his situation, and Misses H. W. Goodwin, E. T. Brown and S. M. Saunders have been employed to perform the duties which had devolved upon him. The number of students admitted by examination has been one hundred and eighty, one hundred and six of whom have left the school—most of whom are now engaged in teaching in some part of our State. The whole sum expended for the School, for Books, Apparatus, Furniture, Rent of Rooms, Salaries and Repairs, has been \$7,221 13. The State's appropriation for the School for the same time

was \$7,300 00, thus leaving a balance in the treasury of \$78 87, to which should be added \$55, received for tuition fees, and paid into the State Treasury, from pupils residing in other states, and not intending to teach in the schools of Rhode Island. Adding this to the balance, makes \$133 87 less than was appropriated for its use.

#### COURSE OF INSTRUCTION.

The Course of Instruction at this School is not designed very materially to extend the scientific knowledge, which its pupils are expected to have gained elsewhere before they enter its walls. It consists in the larger part of thorough reviews, in the exact manner of the ordinary school recitations for scholars in our common schools, of the common branches of English studies. Thus each recitation becomes not only a lesson for the scholar to learn and recite, but a practical example not only of what he must teach in his own school hereafter, but an illustration of the method in which it must be presented to his classes. The common branches of Spelling and Reading are dwelt upon daily; and mental and written Arithmetic is made a topic of constant drill and exercise. Geography is taught here as it ought to be illustrated everywhere—not so much by means of our meager text-books—but by its great principles, and by a constant recurrence to some of the large, full and accurate Atlases and books of reference, such as Gazetteers and Cyclopedias; and continual attention is paid to its connection with History and the grand current of events in the World's progress, and with the Biographies of great and good men that bind themselves indissolubly with the places where they were born, or where they lived and labored, or suffered; thus what was a fossilized study becomes instinct with life and glorious with beauty. The Elements of Algebra and Plane Geometry, so intimately joined, as they are, with many of the common operations of life and business, are taught to some extent, in order to prepare the



teachers by a larger discipline, and a wider range of thought for the duties to which they are to be called. These could not be dispensed with in an institution that aims to prepare teachers for all our schools, and to prepare them to begin with profit, as well as to finish with advantage their duties. Physiology, since it deals so entirely with the functions of the human body, and with the laws and conditions of health, must have a place in every school where teachers are instructed. This eminently useful study is quite as necessary to be studied for the benefit of the mind as for the health of the body; and must sooner or later form a part of the daily routine of common school studies. It is taught in the Normal School by lectures, or by familiar conversations and discussions.

The subject of Mental Philosophy has been introduced in its elements, by means of lectures, and it is hoped will produce a good result. The science is of the greatest importance to the one who would acquire and retain or communicate knowledge. He should, by all means, seek to know the functions, or faculties, or powers of the human mind, and the laws by which they are governed; and it is of no less importance to him to know the operations of the various motives that may be brought to bear upon the young heart and soul to induce it to love knowledge, and to persevere in its acquisition. For these and other reasons, a slight exception is made in favor of these four studies, and some little attention is given to each—not to the exclusion of the fundamentals, but to perfect and enlarge the knowledge and complete the information thus obtained.

But the greater and more important part of the new matter introduced into the course of instruction at the Normal School consists of what are called "Teaching Exercises." These are properly experiments of the pupils in practical instruction. A scholar is assigned a particular branch for a particular time, and it is his duty to present that topic to his fellows of the school at the time. He is required, of

course, to teach something new, as well as what is already known, and to do this in a manner adapted to the capacities of smaller children. After his "Exercise" he is subject to the criticisms of the class, and to the corrections and instructions of the Principal or Teacher having charge of the particular department. These "Exercises" are very popular with the scholars of the school, and are, without doubt, the most excellent part of the system of training in the school.

They give practical skill and confidence, they quicken the inventive faculties, and they afford to the embryo teacher a test of his capability to communicate as well as to learn. And thus, after spending six months or a year in these "Exercises," he goes into a school-room knowing how to conduct all the operations in a pleasing and profitable manner. The only draw-back to the perfection of the school and its course of instruction, is its extreme shortness. It ought to be made to fill at least one entire year, with the means and inducements of continuing another year at the option of the pupil.

The effect of the graduates of the Normal School is already felt to some extent for good upon the teachers of the State. They have gone abroad into various schools, and by coming in contact with other teachers, and by making popular the methods of instruction learned in the Normal School, they are gradually but surely causing the standard of attainments in school teachers to rise, as well as the standard amount of duty they shall be required to perform. If such an influence begins to be apparent within two years from its commencement we may with certainty expect that its benefits will constantly increase till all parts of our State shall feel it, and be made better thereby.

In order, however, to make this influence for good the largest possible, the school ought to have a permanent location, and a building expressly contrived for its use. The building now occupied is more convenient than any hired one

schools than such visits made by the officers of one town to the schools of another. To such visitors the most liberal courtesies would in all cases be accorded with cheerfulness; and while they would promote good feeling between neighboring towns, they would also encourage a generous emulation and spirit of effort to attain excellence, so necessary to permanent progress.

It was by visits somewhat similar to these that the renewed interest felt in the subject of education was inaugurated some thirty years ago;—by the visits and reports of Cousin the French philosopher to the schools of Prussia, and by visits and reports of Professor Stowe, of Cincinnati, and others, to the schools of Europe. And such visits of observation and study made by the school committees of our towns to the other towns and cities of the State, and to other States could not fail to awaken new interest, and to introduce great improvements. But as has already been said, these visits cannot now be made. The pay of school officers forbids it, as well as the short and uncertain time of their continuance in office. They cannot afford to thus qualify themselves for their responsible duties, and if they should thus make themselves intelligently fit for their important position, so as to be able and ready to oversee schools, to make suggestions to teachers, to correct abuses, to advise the parents of a district, and to systematize all the school operations of the town, a whim put into the minds of the voters would effectually place them in a position where all this knowledge and preparation would be utterly useless to themselves and to their townsmen.

There should, if possible, be some means provided by which to secure this very much to be desired interchange of views, and this general spread of intelligence. The Commissioner of Public Schools can do much; but of the five hundred schools of the State, scattered as they are over its hills and in places out of the way of the lines of public travel, he can in any one year visit only a small portion; as his

visit can only be for a short time, he can accomplish little compared to what an intelligent school committee could do by their daily contact with the teachers and parents. Much good may be done by the oversight of a public officer, but the larger part of such work as really affects the schools must be done by the people themselves under his promptings. So County Inspectors by their visitations, if made judiciously, would be very influential for good. There might thus be diffused through a whole county, the valuable suggestions and experiences of long tried teachers and overseers of schools, and the effect of this might be felt at once in every department of the work. If a sum of money were set apart for the visitation of the schools of the State, it is believed that it would do more to introduce uniformity and efficiency into our system than any other measure that could be adopted. A year would undoubtedly be sufficient to accomplish the needed work, and the expense certainly could bear no comparison to the good produced, provided the agent employed were fitted for his work. A system like this in its essential points has been in operation for several years in the neighboring State of Massachusetts, and the plan of County Superintendents in Pennsylvania, New York, New Hampshire and elsewhere, was designed to meet a similar want, and to perform a similar duty.

#### PARENTAL INTEREST AND CO-OPERATION.

As this is the only opportunity the Commissioner has to lay before the whole people of the State and to argue any topic of general interest, he may, very properly, be pardoned for dwelling a moment longer upon this point, which more nearly than any other, concerns the healthful action of our whole common school system. The school officers are not alone interested, and not alone responsible for the tone of public sentiment, and the proper performance of social duty in regard to the education of the children of the com-

monwealth. There is great danger, lest while we provide by law for the support of schools, and make them free to all who are unable to pay the pittance of tax required, we at the same time emphasize so little the parents' duty in connection with the education of his child, as to leave those who reflect superficially, or who scarcely reflect at all—(unless under the stimulus of some active discussion, or exhortation)—to suppose that they have no other duty in the matter but to provide school-houses and books, for the children, to supply them with clothing, and to allow them the whole or half of the six hours' daily time allotted to the school.

No more harmful notion could be lodged in the minds of the members of a community; and it can breed nothing but mischief. In order to have the school perfect, there must be certain previously existing conditions. If the maxim before quoted, "As is the teacher, so will be the school," is to be universally true, these conditions must invariably be complied with, in order to have a perfect school. Indeed, a good teacher will make a better school under the most unpromising circumstances, than an inferior teacher could make in the same situation. But a half-competent school-master will do as well, if not better, where everything has been previously arranged, so as to produce a propitious combination for success, than a first rate one could do, in the same school, if all was disorganized and operating in hostility to his own plans and purposes. But these indispensable conditions of an excellent school cannot, as is now our method of hiring and changing teachers, by any possibility, be arranged by the school-masters themselves. They are the work of the people in the districts and in the towns.

A healthful tone or public sentiment must be maintained, in relation to the amount of time allotted to the children attending school, for their studies at home. There must be in some sense, a mutual understanding among parents as to the studies proper to be introduced into the school-room; and some general consent as to the punctuality of the schol-

ars, and as to the uniformity of the time of their arrival at the school-room. There must be a tacit agreement, at least, as to the authority mutually devolving on the parents and on the master, to see that children come and go directly to and from the place of school, as well as to whose business it is to note and to attempt to prevent altogether the little truancies so liable to occur, especially when the sports and pastimes of boys are unusually tempting. If a neighborhood has not, in some way, settled these important matters, and arrived at some well defined and accurate notions and principles of action, the best school will always show numerous occasions for disorder, or for loss of time and idleness on the part of its scholars. And teachers, in their Meetings, in their Associations, in their Institutes, in their Magazines, and in their daily intercourse with parents, guardians, and others, may discuss and lecture, may exhort, entreat, reprove and argue, as much as they please, and still the evils cannot be cured. The simple truth is, the evil lies away from the sphere of the teacher's influence. As a teacher he cannot touch it. All that he can do to remove it, he must do as a citizen, or as a member of the offending, or neglecting community. While he is a teacher, he has other duties, and must perform them. This work of manufacturing such a public opinion, of organizing the necessary conditions of good schools, belongs to every member of society, and a portion of it devolves upon every parent, however humble, or poor, or distant from the school-house, or however illiterate, or even debased.

We must never forget that the complete success, and ultimate perfection of our system of Public Education, depend on these necessary and fundamental conditions; that the people not only raise taxes, but that they must interest themselves in all the operations of their schools. They must visit for themselves; they must show the scholars by valuable advice, and by every inquiry, that they really prize schools above their simple cost in dollars and cents; and

they must be ready in an emergency to stand by to counsel, encourage, and to sustain the teacher in his efforts to preserve order and to impart instruction.

To this end they must see to the school-house—that its internal arrangement is excellent, and that it is at all times neat, and well supplied with maps, blackboards, chalk, brooms, dusters, and every necessary appendage for hanging cloaks, hats, bonnets, and for securing books, &c. It should be a delightful room, and in place of the naked walls, innocent of all attempt at ornament—except it may be the literal “charcoal sketches” of some rude-minded boy—there might be good and tasteful engravings; a few of which, at a small expense, might adorn every school-room. How elevating and how transforming would be the influence of such an engraving as a portrait of Washington, or of one of Cole's beautiful pictures, the “Voyage of Life,” looking down, always like the descent of the Holy Spirit, upon the young souls of the scholars! They could not look upon these noble things, with their honest and penetrating eyes without opening their yearning hearts wide to receive the divine beauty of Truth, and Honor and Virtue, that glows and almost burns in sublime works of art. It may be said that the scholars will not respect these, but will damage or destroy them, and thus encourage the spirit of recklessness, wanton mischief and destruction. But this has not been found to be the case where they have been in some degree introduced and cared for. The teacher can do something to produce such a state of things in his school as shall make it safe to introduce such ornaments, but it is the people of the district that shall elevate the general public sentiment, and shall make it necessary to obtain them, and preserve them from harm.

Again the people of the district can plant trees and shrubs about their school-house, and they alone can induce their children to avoid doing injury to their young and flourishing beauty: and thus make the spot to which their children

shall daily resort, a place crowned with all earthly loveliness and grace. There is, we know not why nor how produced, an influence in the outward surroundings of childhood, that moulds and fashions character. The aspects of nature, the works of art, that the infant mind looks upon—that his heart clings to—have an almost omnipotent power to make his tastes; and these tastes of his are so closely akin to his moral moods as to do much towards making him virtuous or vicious. If, therefore, parents and the inhabitants of a district would secure their children as much as possible against the early and more insidious approaches of vice and crime, let them all combine to make the school-house a “thing of beauty,” and therefore to the young scholar “a joy forever.” Let it be a spot that in his memory shall never become dry and barren of delightful associations; but a spot where unfailing springs of purest thoughts shall always well up; a spot the thoughts of which shall in the remotest years not only bring to him a remembrance of childlike innocence, but which shall even, in the midst of a career of sin and crime, remind him of truth and holiness, and tend to recall him to a sense of honor and duty.

But still more than the school-house and its outward adornings, must the people of the district endeavor to make the school at each of its sessions—in summer, in autumn, in winter or in spring—a pleasing duty. There are those among us, who, if not fully convinced that learning can never be made agreeable to the young mind, do, nevertheless, contrive to make everybody feel that they have no proper conception of how it can be done. Now, if anything is [pleasing to men or to children, *learning* is; and in the very nature of the case it must be. To comprehend and take in the full meaning of a new truth, must always thrill the mind with a joy transcending all the delights of sense. And the one great reason why our scholars love school no better, must always be that they are not every day kept on the keen search for ideas and facts new and pleasing.—



Learning something is delightful, and when not enforced by stupidity, must always be pursued with eagerness. Securing mental discipline—an object necessary, in order to preserve the remembrance, and to make available the knowledge learned—may not always be so delightful. And if this latter purpose be made the whole business of the school-room, it may, and indeed most commonly does, become irksome to the pupils.

The parents must therefore see to it that the school and schoolmaster are such as to admit of combining those two great objects; and they must do this in great measure by out of door conversation, and by repeated and cheering visits to the school-room. And when they will take such an interest as this, the work of improvement must go on rapidly, and must be such that it can never go backward.

#### LECTURES ON PUBLIC EDUCATION.

The State now appropriates annually from its General Treasury the sum of five hundred dollars to defray expenses of lectures and addresses on the subject of public education and common schools in different parts of the State. Rev. Mr. Vail, of Westerly, and others, have been paid for lectures in all the counties except Bristol county, and it is believed that the influence of these lectures has been very satisfactory. The Commissioner has in every instance except one improved the opportunity to visit the schools in the vicinity when the lectures were given. The people were found very much interested in the improvement of these common nurseries of intelligence, activity and virtue, and the teachers in them were, without an apparent exception, well informed, enterprising and thorough.

Some defects were noticed, it is true, in the construction and arrangements of the school houses; but the most serious evil found in these and other visits, made at other times to different places, arose from the want of suitable.

clean, and entire text books. It may appear to be almost a betrayal of confidence to allude to the very distressing state of things in some of the schools by reason of the want of books really fit to be used. No scholar can successfully study his lessons and pursue his tasks with real interest and satisfaction to himself or to his teachers, unless he is supplied with books in which he can find the whole of his lessons, in reading, spelling, and reciting. It should be a part of the school committee's business to see that parents do not thus defraud their children of the means of acquiring a perfect education, provided for them by the commonwealth. The law provides, and ought to provide to the very poor, the means of purchasing text books for their children at the expense of the town treasury, and if any parent who is able to purchase for his children neglects his duty, the school committee ought to have the power to order books for his children, and hand the bills over to the collector of taxes to be collected as the ordinary taxes of the town and State are collected.

The truth is, that in a large class one scholar unsupplied or ill-supplied with the proper text book, will be a serious drawback on the whole class for the entire term of the school. He will be a broken wheel in the midst of the otherwise perfect machinery, and will, in spite of all the teacher's labors, be a clog to the end of his work. The law ought not to allow the avarice or poverty of any single individual, or of any number, thus to impede the progress of all. And there ought to be a remedy at once thorough and efficient.

It may be objected, here, that the text books are so frequently changed, and at such great cost to the parents and guardians of the scholars, as to make it a very serious and annoying drain upon the means of those who possess only small resources. Sometimes, indeed, there is much truth in these objections it must be granted. But more commonly they are only imaginary evils. In some of the schools of

the State no parent can have been called upon to provide a complete change of text books for the last ten years.—Some of the Readers—or parts of Readers now in use, bear the imprint of 1843, and certainly appear—what is left of them—as if they had seen neither day of rest nor night of idleness, or even careful watching, since that distant day ; and twelve years is a very remarkable old age for a school book—especially if it has—like some of these in question—been handed down through generations of scholars. Books are not made to last forever, and if they were indestructible it would be very bad policy to continue the same ones in a school for ten, fifteen, or twenty years, especially when the school is ungraded. In this case, the smaller children hear the pieces read by the larger ones, and being by the nature of the case compelled to sit and listen, they almost learn them by rote, long before they are able to read for themselves. In this way they catch the erroneous tones, the wrong inflections, the bad pronunciations, the false accents, and the improper pauses, and they will remember these and repeat them from year to year with a remarkable accuracy. Thus a class of school faults in reading and reciting will be continued and repeated from year to year, in spite of the successive administrations of different and very worthy teachers—each of which may make great and ineffectual efforts to break up the current of evil influences.—The proper and ready remedy, for such a state of things, is in a change of text books.

#### UNIFORMITY OF TEXT BOOKS IN OUR SCHOOLS.

The subject of text books is a fruitful one both of annoyance to teachers and of expense to parents. Perhaps all the other sources of complaint put together are not so fruitful of ill feeling and so really injurious to the improvement of our schools as this one alone. Scholars come to the school room, with each an old book, different from any

other book on the same branch of study in the whole school. Readers are quite as numerous as the classes, if not as many as the families in the district. A half dozen sorts of Arithmetics give a great variety in the examples for practice, and in the mode of carrying on the numerical operations. There are almost as many Geographies as pupils in the study—some of them with atlases, some without them, some of them of very recent date, and others of them having served the fathers and mothers of the present generation of scholars. As to Grammars, Murray still holds his place in some schools, in the midst of a whole host of reformers who quarrel with him and with each other. While Spellers and new Spellers, Definers and Revised Definers, are as plenty as the frogs were in Egypt, and quite as vexatious. And smaller books, Primers, and Improved Primers, Child's First Books, and Children's Pictorial Primers and Readers, all crowd into the peaceful arena of the district school, to do over again "the battle of books," and re-introduce the confusion of Babel, without the possibility of a Babel-like dispersion.

But still another difficulty arises from the multiplication of new editions of the same book. A very popular school book, to name which would be easy, has passed through not less than eight changes within the last ten years; and it is almost as impossible to use in the same class any two of these, as it would be to use books by different authors. Thus we find several versions by each of several authors on almost every branch of school study, and in many cases the disorder is multiplied by first, second and third Edition, revised and enlarged, of each of these versions. How can scholars be graded and classified, and be made to move on at an equal pace, and with pleasure, rapidity and uniformity in such a state of things as this? And how can a teacher who enters such a school to remain only four months, be expected to do much for his pupils' advancement in knowledge? The methods of these discordant

books are conflicting, and contrary, and in prefaces, remarks, or foot-notes often contain improper allusions to the others, and inflict marked censure upon their rules or arrangements. In such circumstances, the teacher's task is, if possible, more hopeless than that of the Israelites, to make bricks without straw ; it is truly like making sweetness with acids and alkalies ; and he is one of the great men, who, with disadvantages like these, can accomplish so much that the winter or summer shall not be a total loss.

These difficulties grow in part out of the fact that our State contains such a large number of small manufacturing villages, each one having a school of its own—often carried on during a portion of the year, with a very commendable intention, as a private school. While this school is strictly a private affair, the teacher has a right, of course, to introduce his favorite text books. When the time comes for the four months Public School, it is for the interest of the parents and guardians to continue to use these same books, whether there is the same or another teacher, and the School Committee of the town, judging very properly, under the circumstances, that the pupils will make better progress without a change, suffer the books already introduced to remain, to the exclusion of those on the list prescribed for the schools of the town. Thus many of these independent villages in the same town sometimes have each a separate series of text books for their schools.

When now it becomes necessary, as it often does, or when whim prompts to it, for these families to remove to another village, they carry the old school books with them, and seek—(in order to save expense, knowing that a few months will breed in them the desire, or create the necessity for another profitless migration)—to avoid the large expense of money—(waste they will call it)—for new books uniform with the place of their present abode. And we may be assured that these so frequent changes of residence do lay an almost exorbitant tax on our migratory popula-

tion, for the books from which their children shall acquire the amount of knowledge needed to fit them for respectability in society, and for an energetic and enlightened discharge of their duties to their fellow men. The burden thus imposed—added to the expense of removing the family—is almost intolerable, and does really keep many children from the public schools—allowing them to perform labor in cotton mills, and entailing upon them the loss of health and childish vivacity, with ignorance and lack of ambition to rise in knowledge; or worse still, sending them forth to idle and sneak in the streets, and to grow up in vice and hatred of all that is good and noble.

There is therefore some shadow of excuse for many parents to detain their children from the public school. They are not poor enough, and have still too much pride, (if they were so plunged in poverty,) to ask from the town treasury a supply of books for their children, in order that they may attend the school; there are not books at hand to be hired at a cheap rate, and if they purchase an entire set of new ones for their three or four children, and then in addition give them suitable clothes to make them as respectable as the little ones of the neighborhood, the sum will swell beyond their scanty means. When, therefore, they declare that they are unable to send to the public school, and thus preserve their children from ignorance and barbarism, they are, in some good sense objects of commiseration rather than unmeasured censure. And the question at once occurs, is it necessary to oblige the parents to encounter such a torrent of expense in order to maintain public schools? The expense would of course be still greater at private schools, for here the interests of teachers would be either to sell new books to each pupil who came, or to give the chance of that sale to some friend or influential patron, thus still further adding to the higher price of tuition at these places. What then can be done to secure at once economy to the parents in the expense of buying

books, and uniformity of authors and editions in the schools?

Some very obvious methods, aside from any change or addition to the school law, at once present themselves. One is for each town to secure the services of a school committee, firm, intelligent, judicious, and thoughtful, and to continue them in office from year to year, giving them instructions to secure uniformity of books in *all* the schools of the town, and also instructing them not to make a change in the books they may select, without a vote of the town, until they have been used at least three or five years. This would suggest the propriety of greater care in examining before a book is introduced, and it would conduce to permanence in the usage; while at the same time it would prevent the so frequent, the so impertinent, and the so unprincipled intermeddling of book agents with the school committee's business. It would also be a stimulus to the visitors and examiners of schools, to insist that all the schools in town, when public—(no matter how it might be while they were private)—should use the prescribed books. This would be a great step in the right direction, and would add vastly to the efficiency of our school system.

Another measure tending to the same end, and almost identical with the one already named, would be to place all the schools of the town directly under the charge of the school committee, according to the 19th Section of the school law. The committee would then hire all the teachers, examine them all, converse with them, visit their schools, and, in short, control the whole of their operations. The schools would then of course easily be made uniform in many things where uniformity is so profitable.

Another method, adopted in some towns, is for the town to appoint an agent, who shall purchase and take charge of the books for the schools of the town. These books are then loaned to the scholars, each one paying, or the town paying for him if poor, a small sum as an entrance fee, for the

use of his books. Thus the town owns all the school books, and receives pay for them by this small term-tax. In such circumstances the temptation to change is comparatively small, and the cost to parents is uniform and insignificant. If every town in the State would adopt this mode of supplying its schools, but little more could be desired.

But many towns have not adopted it, and many more will not come into such an arrangement for a long time to come. And as families are monthly changing from one town to another, the evil is likely to continue for an indefinite period. Some modification of the law might therefore be suggested. And yet it is much better to make changes seldom, and only as the practical workings of the law have demonstrated the necessity or the benefit of such changes. It may be argued that, as books are really necessary to efficient schools, and in order that the large amount of money now raised by tax be neither in whole squandered, nor its worth be in part diminished, it is as obligatory to secure provision for these, as it is to build and maintain school-houses, and to supply them with all the apparatus for improvement, and the appurtenances of comfort.

It can hardly be doubted, but that the cost to the whole people of the State would be much less, if the books were all bought by the towns, or by the State itself, and the money to pay for them raised by tax on the property, and complete uniformity required in all the schools, restricting changes to particular times in each of the school studies.—Then, if it were thought best, an admission fee for the use of these books, could be taxed upon the scholars, and those unable to pay could be relieved from it by order of the school committee, and their fees paid out of the town treasury. As families so often move from one town or county of the State to another, some system which should secure uniformity throughout our whole territory would, of course, be best for the entire community. This would relieve many of the school committees and teachers from the almost in-



tolerable nuisance of such book agents, as travel about to find fault with every treatise on a particular topic, except the single one of which they happen to be the venders.—Book agents may have accomplished some good; and new authors, by their zeal to distribute their works, may do something to keep alive an enthusiastic and an awakened attention to new and improved modes of presenting each topic of school study. But this is when they are engaged about their legitimate business of removing the very old, imperfect, long-used, and therefore, uninteresting books. On the contrary where they attempt, for the sake of their own emolument, to remove from the schools books lately introduced, and of acknowledged merit, simply for the purpose of introducing their own, they become real nuisances, and their pertinacious persuasions are among the most serious of those annoyances that beset the life of a school officer.

Could the State, as is proposed by a Resolution now before the Committee of the House of Representatives on Education, or could the towns be authorized and induced to adopt some system of producing uniformity, without obliging the parents of the children to purchase so many books, there can be no doubt but that the measure would, as soon as it was fairly in practice, commend itself to the good sense of the community, and aid, more than almost any other measure, to give perfection and stability to our excellent system of common schools. The cost would be so much less, if there could be a perfect combination of the whole people; the good expected from the schools would be so much more, if every scholar always had the proper books of suitable quality; and the general progress would be so much more uniform in all localities, if every child possessed exactly the same advantages of text-books, as well as of teachers, that no one can hesitate to desire to accomplish the end. The means by which to accomplish it are somewhat difficult, and would require the greatest wisdom.

## REPORTS OF SCHOOL COMMITTEES.

The school law passed in 1851 obliges the school committee of each town to present an Annual Report to the town meeting of the state of the public schools for the year then last past; and it requires that this report shall either be read in open town meeting, or that it shall be printed for distribution throughout the town; and the law allows the school committee to reserve a sum not exceeding twenty dollars for the printing of this report. This sum is not generally sufficient to print and distribute as full a report as ought to be made, but it is believed to be as large as any general law of the state should authorize. The towns, however, in some cases, have paid for printing the school committee's report out of the ordinary revenues of the town, and this is undoubtedly the proper way. Each citizen of a town ought to be informed of the state and condition of the public schools, and this information the town and not the school money ought to supply.

This report ought to go into the family whence every scholar comes, and should be then read by the mothers, by the elder sisters and brothers, and by the scholars themselves. The teachers ought to see it. And it ought to be sent to every other town in the State, and often to towns in other states; and thus it would bring back in exchange a large variety of valuable statistical and useful information, which could not fail to suggest useful improvements to the committee. The amendment to the law passed at the May session, 1855, obliges each committee to transmit to the Commissioner of Public Schools a copy of their annual report, as well as the returns. It is hoped that this requirement, so needful to give a full understanding of the operations of the system in all parts of the State—a requirement so manifestly reasonable in itself, and so promising of good—will by no means be neglected. The amendment was not passed till

after most of these reports were made up, and nearly every town at once complied with the law.

The several reports received, are printed in the Appendix, and will be found to contain many valuable suggestions.—Attention is asked to them, and to the full and ample testimony that they give to the fact of the ability of the people of the several towns to take care of this most precious interest committed to their charge. While they complain of many evils, and lament much indifference on the part of parents, they do nevertheless speak in a hopeful spirit of some good progress made, and anticipate with confidence a more marked and healthful progress for the future. They are in themselves the best evidences of the generally high estimate put by the people themselves upon the great system of public education.

They do, indeed, either directly or by implication, indicate in some cases irregularities in the mode of apportioning the money received from the State—a thing that has been allowed chiefly because no authentic information respecting the practice has been received at this office. The towns ought to understand that they receive the money from the State on certain conditions, among which are that they shall raise by tax upon the property of the town, a sum not less than one third of the town's just proportion of twenty-five thousand dollars; that the money shall be divided one half equally among the several districts of the town, and the other one-half according to the average attendance of scholars at the district school for the year preceding; and that the town shall maintain a vigilant superintendence and supervision of its schools, and shall make a faithful and true report of the condition of these schools at the proper time to the proper authorities. It will be wrong in the general, and unjust to such towns as comply with these very reasonable conditions, to allow many to remain in non-compliance; and it will therefore be the duty of the Commissioner to declare in cases of a continuance in the neglect of the State's requirements, a forfeiture of the public money apportioned to any town so derelict.

## MORAL INSTRUCTION.

It has become a question whether the increased diffusion of knowledge does really promote virtue, or whether knowledge simply as such, does not make men more skillful as knaves and rogues, as well as more powerful and energetic in every good enterprise. The question is one of great importance, and is one of those radical ones which must for a very long time remain unsettled. But this is readily conceded on all hands, that if education neglects the culture of the moral nature, it does not necessarily render the child more capable or more likely to do right than if he remained uneducated. There is a great distinction between knowing facts and being able to follow the instinctive impulses of a loving and conscientious nature. And in order to render education a blessing, something more is needed than the communication of facts, or than giving a sort of mental dexterity in adding columns of figures, or performing rapidly any other drills and exercises of the school room, or than fitting the student to conduct the mere manual operations of practical business life. If the pupil is to be educated to do right he must have another training besides that which he generally gets from the spelling book, the arithmetic, the geography, or the grammar. These must not be neglected by any means; but they must not be the *all* of his school-room attainments. He must learn each of them so as to feel that truth in it somehow directly connects itself with truth in the life and in the very soul of man; and that all these little attainments and accomplishments are only valuable when belonging to a noble character. And he must be taught that right knowing, cannot be praiseworthy unless it be combined with right acting.

While all concede this, and still further agree that the elementary principles of morality and uprightness, and that the rules of virtue and integrity are few, and well settled in theory at least, there has been a sort of squeamish fear that in teaching the elements of moral truth we must almost necessarily allow our teaching to degenerate into sectarian instruction; or as the more com-

mon and more dreaded phrase is, that we should be teaching religion. It will be well to remember that religion and sectarianism are very different, and that when the first is well and thoroughly aught and mastered, and practically known, the latter necessarily must be forgotten; and it is well not to forget that the teaching of morality—although always connecting itself with one very important part of religion—is not, and when rightly taught cannot be, religion. We may reckon that the whole round of morals is not marked out until the duties of man to his Maker are also prescribed. But the enumeration of these duties, properly called religious duties, does not by any means include the teaching of the manner in which they ought to be performed—which is often the whole gist and essence of religious controversies. We must insist that this latter shall be left out of our school instruction. But while we insist upon it, we ought to insist that every moral duty shall be taught by precept and example. And unless the attention of school teachers and school committees is called to this important element in our school education—instruction in the elements of practical morality—we may well fear that no power can save our population, educated in the schools and made keen-sighted, from being more potent for evil than for good. It would be well for us to recur to the fundamental principles of a good education and re-enumerate them, and if need be, re-classify them; putting virtue and obedience to law above mere intellectual acumen or brilliant genius, and forming the ideals of excellence for our children's contemplation on the models of upright goodness, and patient continuance in right acting, rather than on the amount of honor or emolument gained.

That it is a State's duty, and the true object had in view by any system of public education, to make a virtuous population, will hardly be doubted. Indeed, the expenditure of the public money for any system of state schools, can scarcely be justified on other grounds than on those of self-preservation, and the duty to promote the general prosperity of the commonwealth. Ignorance does clog the wheels of enterprise, and fetter the steps of all improvement; and when men unite into a community they do it partly from an uncontrollable instinct of their natures, and partly

from a desire to possess and enjoy certain advantages and privileges which in a solitary state they could never have had. They must then, after they have thus united, seek, by all lawful and proper means, to preserve their union, and to promote most successfully the ends desired. They have therefore a right, nay, it becomes their imperative duty to encourage the spread of intelligence and the repression of ignorance. But ignorance is not, by a hundred fold, so deadly a foe to the quiet and permanence of a society as is vice; and hence the duty of the state to suppress this most destructive of monsters. The penal laws all proceed upon the supposition that it is a solemn duty to punish the overt act of crime and vice. Is it not then a duty to prevent these? And this can be done partly by education, if that education embraces suitable subjects, and is imparted in a proper manner. The right of a community to take measures for its own self-preservation, therefore implies, and carries along with it the duty, to educate its children, and save them from both ignorance and vice—the one of which benumbs and stifles, the other of which corrupts and blights, whatever might be good and noble.

To make our schools then what they are intended to be, the conservators and stimulators of all goodness and enterprise, they must be made redolent of moral influences; they must be at all times filled with the all-pervading presence of virtuous instructions. It must be the teacher's duty to study daily in what manner he can best form his scholars to the manners of good, law-abiding citizens, and brave-hearted, energetic defenders of the weak and defenseless. He must remember that no external ornaments of learning—no mere polish of refinement—can atone for the possession of a debased and an unworthy soul. We must insist on this high unsectarian moral instruction in all the school rooms which the state sends its money to support, and its officers to oversee. We must insist that a moral character is the first requisite in a teacher, and that an ability to teach the same morality, is a matter of higher importance than any amount of merely secular knowledge.

But with all these concessions on our part as to the importance of moral instruction in the school room, parents have seemed to

feel that all the work of education, moral as well as scientific, was to be given in the school room. And hence it is thought that less attention has been paid to the subject out of the school room than formerly. The first great lesson of childhood is to learn to speak the truth; and if a child learns it not in his infancy almost, it is next to impossible for him to learn it while here on earth; and when this is once learned—learned so as to become an easy thing to practice—the learning of everything else useful and noble is an easy task. Our schools should teach this thing, in their every recitation, in their every prescribed task, and in all their duties. This pertains to the teacher's daily duty as well as to the parents and the school committee.

#### DISTRICT SCHOOL LIBRARIES.

Somewhat closely connected with this is another duty of the State. If it is the duty and interest of a State to instruct in science, in truth, and in morals, its rising population, and labor for its own self preservation and improvement, it is also its duty to go somewhat further, and prevent as much as may be, the vice and crime that grow out of the unemployed activity of mind which the common school has awakened. The school is a most potent quickener of the intellectual energies, and where these are awakened they will employ themselves usefully or mischievously. If youth who have been partially educated at the public expense, when they leave school, or are not confined within its walls, can, out of the private fortunes of their parents or guardians, be furnished with suitable mental employment such as is at once pleasing and profitable, most of the dangers that beset them will be avoided. The children of the rich are in circumstances to be provided with such food for mental activity in the shape of good and interesting books, just as they could have been provided with excellent schools without taxing the public purse for this end. But the children of the poor can be so accommodated with this mental food only at the public expense; and for all the middle classes who are seeking to rise in the social scale by the accumulation of wealth, the expense combined with the sacrifice, of time and trouble which educating children requires, is too great

to be endured cheerfully, even for the well being of their offspring. But combination—as in the case of the public schools—is far cheaper for all classes—the rich, the poor, the middle—and far more beneficial for all concerned. It is far better for all the youth to drink knowledge, morality, and virtue, as well as general intelligence, and special impulses to energetic activity, from the same common fountain. Let our schools then be patronized by all, and let them be made capable of teaching, and furnishing mental employment to more than those who are in them. Let them not only educate the children who are especially taught at the desks, but let them be repositories of thought for those who have gone beyond them.

This looks to the establishment of District School Libraries. For if a community educates its poorer children to read, it ought not to turn them off at the age of fifteen with appetites for knowledge whetted by study, and prepared by discipline to digest all other knowledge, only to be tantalized with the sight of books filled with scientific and moral information, or to satiate those appetites on the garbage which floats along the stream that a polluted press rolls over the land. This ought to be cared for, and the means provided to carry our youth farther along in their studies than they can go in the school.

It should be the State's duty then to provide reading for such purposes, in order that it may profit by all the talent it has discovered in the common school. It is believed that considerations like these have prompted our neighbors to engage in this very useful and very promising field. Massachusetts many years ago gave to each of her three thousand districts a school library worth thirty dollars. New York distributed more than a million of volumes among her inhabitants; Ohio pays a tax of one mill on a dollar, raising thereby some fifty thousand dollars annually—to give her children good books to read; Indiana has expended two hundred thousand dollars for the same great object; and Canada West annually gives to each of its districts a sum equal to that which it will raise by tax on itself, for the great purpose of continuing the education of the children which the common school begins. Other states, both East and West, are moving to



elevate themselves by the same liberally devised and far seeing philanthropy. And shall we be less enterprising in our own behalf? Shall we give our children less advantages than they? Because we have been so fortunate as to be blest with sons and daughters, shall they find that they have been deprived of privileges because born in *our* midst? Ought it not to be our boast and pride that those whom God has thus committed to our care, possess larger means for improvement, higher advantages for the formation of noble and manly characters, than can be found in any other spot. We ought to make it our boast that every child sent to us—an angel from heaven—is provided, at the cheapest rate it may be, but at all events in the best manner, with every means and with every appliance to keep him in an angel's pathway, from his advent on earth, to his final return to the skies—that he is taught knowledge and virtue at the public expense, that he is provided with books, and that he is thus furnished with all the opportunities of growing in goodness and greatness that a human being ought to enjoy or could improve.

The plan of providing such District School Libraries, adopted by the Parliament of Canada West, is undoubtedly the wisest that has yet been acted upon. It is in short this. The Parliament by vote appropriated a specific sum to purchase a suitable number of books, charts, and articles of apparatus for Schools and School Libraries. This sum was expended under the direction of the Superintendent of Public Education, and a large depository of excellent and select books for the reading of youth and older persons was made at the Office of Education. Whenever any school district or municipality wishes to form a Library, it may send to the office of the General Superintendent a sum not less than five dollars, and the Superintendent adds one hundred per cent to the sum, and returns, at cost prices, such books to the district as it may, by a committee or otherwise, have selected from the printed catalogue of the depository. Thus the books that go into libraries, are books that have been well examined, and contain nothing that is frivolous, or that could poison the morals of those who read them; the

Libraries purchase them at the wholesale price, and of course can obtain a much larger amount of reading matter for their money than though they had each made the purchases direct from the booksellers for themselves, and at the same time they are stimulated to do something for themselves, as well as to ask that something may be done for them. It is believed that some such plan might be carried into effect in our own State greatly to the profit of the whole community.

But other arguments besides the mere duty of encouraging virtue and repressing vice, might be urged in behalf of a measure so fraught with promises of advantage to a commonwealth. It is the custom of municipalities, corporations, societies, and even of states, to provide at certain times and seasons, at the public expense, festivals and shows, as fireworks, celebrations, orations, and long and magnificent processions. The leading thought and purpose of these things is to give to the whole people some common source of relaxation, amusement, and enjoyment; and in any age there have been only a few, and those men of strong prejudices, to doubt the practical utility and worth of such solemnities. They do serve to bind us all to the great Past, the fruitful Mother of all our comforts, and of all our improvements. They tend to bind all men together in the bonds of a common fellowship, and to make us know more of the sentiments of right, truth, and duty, that glow in the hearts of the high and noble, and burn also in the souls of the lower and the more unfortunate. They remind us of our common and mutual dependence one on the other, and all on God and righteousness, and prepare us for the great Heaven of everlasting equality and nobleness which we were made that we might hasten forward to.

Good books! written in the olden times of man's untrammelled thinking,—and read, studied, admired and almost adored by a hundred generations before us! Good books! redolent of the virtues and graces of all earth's previous

goodness and loveliness, filled with the histories of those great and noble men whose deeds built nations, and whose words instructed them, crowded with the events of empires whose power and glory covered the earth as with a mantle of light, and teeming with the beautiful but sorrowful stories of the toilsome progress and the eventful fortunes of science, liberty and religion! Good books! bursting full of the wisdom, the wit and the philosophy of those in honor of whom realms take their names, and to whose characters the world is proud to do homage, like the sapphire sky with its spangles of gold, thick set with the radiant glories of Virtue, Holiness and Truth, and instinct with a living power to enkindle in the heart of their lowliest readers, a fire as pure, as diffusive, and as transforming as divinity! What a treasure are they to this world of ours! And what a source of all goodness, honor and nobleness! The neighborhood that has a little library of them, has a living power in its heart to draw around it the affections of its sons and daughters, and drawing them to it, how loftily and how rapidly can it instruct them in all duty and in obedience! In no way can a state do more for its children with such a trifling expense, than by providing and securing for its citizens, the sweet and refining pastimes which good books afford to all who can read. The vice and idleness of a single year, caused by the want of something useful to read, will cost such a community far more than ten times the worth or expense of books sufficient to supply the whole people with reading for five years to come.

#### BOOKS OF REFERENCE IN SCHOOLS.

If this is not thought advisable, there ought at least to be some good reference books put into every one of our school rooms. Every one knows how meager, for instance, are our common school geographies. They contain the elements of that very useful science to be sure, but nothing

more than the barest elements. And when scholars have gone through with them they can be expected to know very little of the surface of the earth and its productions, its towns, and its inhabitants. To remedy these deficiencies, every school room ought to have a large and correct Atlas, or a set of well prepared maps and charts—such as are in use among men of business, and a well digested and arranged Gazetteer. No money could be better used than a small sum expended to procure for every district school an Encyclopedia, and a Dictionary of Arts and Sciences. For these would show something of the extent of the world of knowledge to which the school is designed to introduce the pupil, as well as the mode of consulting original sources of information; and would form his mind to habits of diligent investigation, and to habits of independent and self-reliant thought. And the grand object of all education, both in the school room and out of it, is to elevate and confirm in strong, intelligent and enterprising truth and goodness, the soul of every person in the community. These would not be used for the ordinary purposes of recitation, but for reference in the reading lessons, in the arithmetical problems, and in the general exercises of the school. The scholar would then learn how to use these things to verify the assertions and statements of his school books, and to correct and supply their deficiencies, and thus would be doing exactly what he will be called to do almost every day in his future life.

Besides these books, there should be in every school room a full and authentic standard Dictionary of the English Language, and the scholars and teachers should make daily and hourly use of it. This is as necessary as a black board and chalk. It should be used to explain the meanings of words, to settle disputed questions of orthography and pronunciation, and to stimulate enquiry and to secure and encourage accuracy in all things. The Commissioner feels no hesitation in saying that no Dictionary yet published can

sustain a thorough comparison with that of Noah Webster, revised by Professor Goodrich, of N. Haven. There should also be in the school room, and easy of access to all, a good Biographical Dictionary, and this would be found especially useful as a teacher of a noble practical morality by examples—that method of nature so pleasing to all—so profitable especially to the young. These Maps, Charts, Atlases and Books of Reference ought to be indispensable appendages to every school room. And it is believed that it is as much the duty of the State to aid its rural schools, and its city schools in procuring them, as it is to aid, in giving to these same schools good schoolmasters.

If these were bought by the State in a quantity sufficient for all her schools, and were sold to such districts as would pay the one half of the wholesale price, the actual expenditure on the part of the commonwealth would be comparatively trifling, and the benefit would be incalculable. It would be just such a measure as would infuse new vigor and energy into the cause of education. It would instruct the teachers in a new and a fresher method of teaching. It would give a new direction to the thoughts and to the studies of the pupils. And it could not fail to make our system of education conform more exactly to the wants of a practical life.

That some such measures as that of supplying the school districts with libraries, or that of furnishing the school-room with reference books would be a good investment of funds, need not be argued. That it would at once complete the outlines of our most excellent system of Public Education, will be seen at a glance, and that it is a measure effected at a comparatively trifling cost, is readily understood. It will therefore be useless, and would imply a want of confidence in the common sense, and in the prudent foresight of the people, if we should attempt to urge and enforce it by further argument. The subject seems to need only to be stated to commend itself to every one. Whether the present

time will be most propitious for commencing it, and whether the state of the Commonwealth's finances will permit the outlay, is a question for the honorable General Assembly to dispose of in their own way.

These suggestions are made in the hope that each year will see us taking at least one forward step in the great work of self-improvement as a people, and in the hope that we shall unitedly move onward to perfect what has been so well begun in this noble enterprise.


#### THE DUTY OF THE PEOPLE.

It should be remembered by us, that in our country there is no power to carry into operation any system, or to enforce any law, other than the people themselves. In Prussia, in France, and even in England, the central government takes upon itself to superintend everything, and to visit and examine the schools, and keep in operation the whole machinery that is to educate less than half the whole people. The government, in some way, gets the law enacted and the appropriations for schools ordered by the parliamentary authority, if necessary, and then it makes officers to see to the disbursement of the money, to the appointment of teachers, to the supply of school-houses, and to the examination and oversight of the schools. It prescribes the books, fixes upon the studies of the classes, insists on marking out the duties of the teacher, and decrees the proper mode of religious services at the opening and closing of the duties of the day. In this way the means or privileges of education are provided for the people, who have no other care than simply to see that the children are fed and sent daily to the school. The officer, responsible to the central government, paid by it, instructed by it, and making his only report to its head, takes care of everything else.

This, if the central government has sufficient authority to enforce it, and can find wise and energetic executive officers in the subordinate as well as in the higher departments of

its work, will bring into immediate and efficient operation a well devised system of public education, at once perfect in theory and beneficial in tendency. The ignorance, the stupidity, the selfishness, it may be, of the people, have nothing to do with hindering its workings. Their discussions, their scruples, their opinions respecting the system and its operations, are all of no account whatever, so far as its healthful operations are concerned. The system thus devised and set up among them, will be better carried forward if they are completely passive. They must indeed pay taxes if they have the shadow of property. But they have no concern in fixing the amount of that tax. No responsibility attaches to them as to the mode of its expenditure. No duty as to the school-house or its fixtures, as to its locality or comfort. They are esteemed children and have everything provided for them, and their only business is to submit to be blessed with all the advantages of good education for their offspring, without foresight or responsibility on their part.

In this view of the case the schools grow out of the idea of the self-preservation of the existing form of government. They are calculated to teach only such things, and such an amount of knowledge as shall conduce to exalt the dignity and promote the stability of the particular form and mode of government which has established them. They must educate according to the government idea, and seek to fashion men and women to be content with and to preserve that form of government. Hence in despotic or monarchical countries, it might readily be expected that the schools would tend to strengthen the throne and its prerogatives, and to make the existing order of things more permanent. They should make each subsequent generation of children more learned in the duty of obedience and acquiescence to those whom accident has established in places of power above them. They should, in short, become the most formidable barriers erected against the approach of revolutions



and the best preventives to uneasiness and desire of change among the people. This seems to have been in no mean degree the tendency of the public school system of Prussia, Austria and Russia, and it is conclusive as to the conservative influence of education in general, and especially of schools and common school teaching, when it contemplates one object, and proceeds towards it with a steady step.

In our country, on the contrary—and glad should we be that this contrary is true—there is no power except the people themselves who can have any care—or any efficient and valuable control of the matter. The General Government at Washington—whether wisely or not—has never interfered at all in the subject of education—not even in the way of donations for its slightest encouragement. It has no Department, no Office, devoted to this subject, and even in its Census Statistics it scarcely shows a sign of interest in it. The policy of the country is to leave it as much as possible to the people themselves. Hence the highest authority that presumes to lay its hand upon the means of educating the people is the State Government; and this touches it only as the people themselves direct. And even this government gives very properly and very philosophically the whole power of managing, conducting, and bringing to perfection these schools or this education, to the people in their municipal capacities as towns or as districts. Thus the whole necessary and essential work of education falls entirely upon the people, in their minutest and most original assemblages.

All this implies the necessity that the whole people—not some few far-seeing and philanthropic men—shall have some correct and definite notions of what the school is designed to accomplish, and also of the best and most direct manner of accomplishing that object. To this end much discussion must be had among the people—the latest thoughts and experiences of able men must be scattered broadcast over the land, till every one knows and under-



stands the whole theory and the practical workings of the best system of public instruction. And in all this the first and most essential thing to be known by school officers, by parents and the community generally, and by school teachers, is, what is Education?

#### WHAT IS EDUCATION?

This is a fundamental question, and one on which men are by no means agreed as yet. The word Education is the highest of a series of terms, all implying something in common, yet expressing very different ideas. The word improvement is used of whatever grows gradually better, as of fruit, of a field, of stock, or of a man. We use it where the thing in itself, either with or without foreign assistance, so changes as to be reckoned of a better quality, or of more worth than formerly. The term cultivation has an import somewhat more dependent on a foreign agency. Thus a field is cultivated—an inanimate object made better by an extraneous agency. We speak of training a dog or a horse. This is where the subject is intelligent and has a will of his own. Then when he becomes better fitted for another use, we say we have trained him. Again we speak of disciplining soldiers, and we mean that we so exact obedience and orderly movements, as to compel beings with free wills to move with the regularity of machines. But education, in some sense, includes each of these, embracing improvement, cultivation, training, discipline, and instruction, together with a higher idea superadded—of self-elevation developing individual characteristics. It is only a drawing out and perfecting of all that is good in the human soul, and raising, strengthening and completing it with all the results of effort to inform, to enliven, to energize. It is true indeed that almost every writer on the subject will affirm that the whole is embraced in the three-fold division, Physical, Intellectual and Moral Education, and all who read most

readily assent to the statement, as not only embracing and rightfully distinguishing the whole ground of discussion, but as including all that can be said on it. These several parts do indeed deserve to be included, but they do not, after all, go far enough and embrace what is most essential to the nature of man. Man is composed of a body and of a mind, and both must be kept in a healthful state, as well as be rendered vigorous, alert, skilful, and obedient to the Will, or Soul within and over all. He is a moral being, or in other words he stands in certain relations to the world around, to his fellow men, and to God above him. Out of these various and complicated relations grow duties and obligations more or less complicated, but all binding upon him and pointing to some self-sacrificing action on his part. Now the child must be instructed to use his hands, his eyes, his ears, his limbs, all his senses, and all his faculties of body. His health and his progress, both in knowledge and happiness, depend upon this. Physical Education, therefore, is principally acquired by practice. The eye may be trained only by use. If it will be rendered keen, accurate and quick as the eagle's, it cannot acquire its skill by any nostrums applied, by any season of rest enjoyed, nor by any confining in bandages or nursing in a dark room. It must be carried abroad and watch everything—the minute as well as the grand—that passes before it. It must encounter the sun when he dazzles and almost blinds, and the storm when it beats and confounds with dust or with snow and sleet. It must strain after the microscopic that lies near, and struggle to grasp the distant buried in the dim haze that a telescope scarce can pierce. So of the ear. It must wait and listen for the faint whisper of the wind-touched harp, and learn not to be appalled by the thunder's awful crash. It must be taught to know with the infallibility of an animal's instinct the pitch of every note in the scale, the degree of force in every modulation of sound, and the tone of expression in every cry or voice of passion or

affection. So of the hand. It needs to be so skilled that it can execute any motion, or perform any required work, with the precision of a machine; and the tongue must be so disciplined that it can give, without hesitation or stammering, any accent, emphasis, or inflection that truth or justice may require it to utter.

This is Physical Education, to make the body the well-trained, the ready, the unerring servant of the mind; so that it shall accomplish whatever purpose seems to be demanded of it according to the great law of human duty, under any circumstances and in any emergency. But this sort of Education is not accomplished solely by acting upon the body. The mind has quite as much to do with it as have the bodily organs or the whole physical system. To give any sense or any corporal power to its greatest efficiency we must look to the mind for the source of its energy. If the body can be simply kept in health, and free from languor, the mind or the will can educate it, and in time can make it to obey in every important or unimportant particular. Two things then seem necessary in order that the body of a child, or his physical system may be successfully and rapidly educated: first, that the corporeal system be preserved, by good air, proper food, comfortable clothing, suitable regimen, and invigorating exercise, in the most efficient health; and second, that the mind be constantly acting as its governor and guide, compelling it to obey and daily to grow in the ready implicitness with which it follows the behests of the sublime governor—the Will.

Intellectual Education, as we have termed it, consists in bringing before the mind a vast variety of facts, in their proper connections and orderly arrangements, so that these may be treasured up for future use, making them, at the same time, conduce to strengthen, to discipline, and to enlarge all the powers of that mind, fitting and enabling it to perceive all the hidden links that bind effects to their causes in nature, and to discover the properties, the rela-

tions, and the laws of all things around and within us.— Education thus understood is to quicken and to develop every lawful power or impulse in the soul, and to bring it, full of strength and resolution, to act its proper part in the great work of knowing all that is spread out before us. It is to make man understand the cause and meaning of every phenomenon that transpires, and to make him capable of drawing therefrom some profit to himself and to his race.— It is to enable him to know and to use the powers of his mind as well as the powers of his body, and to give him the complete command and control of the various forces and agencies of nature around him, so that he shall become the lord of all living and material things.

But education implies far more than even this. It is to train man to know why he lives, and with whom and how he is connected, to make him understand what is right and suitable for him to do, and so to form his mind to the fashion of truth and honesty, that he shall more readily and thoroughly despise a mean thing, than he loathes unwholesome food. It is to enable him to follow the unselfish and noble instincts of innocent childhood, which prompt him to be generous and just, to be loving and helpful. All this is but a part of education. For it must be remembered that man is not simply a creature in whom unite the animal and the intellectual natures. He has a spirit, or soul, a will besides, and in all education we must have more or less reference to this. He should not be educated as we train a horse or a dog, but as a creature akin to angels, and destined to progress in knowledge and virtue, or in ignorance and vice forever. We must in our education take into account the tendencies of what we communicate, as well as the probable influence of our discipline, and arrange our course of study and instruction so as to promote and accelerate man's progressive goodness and uprightness.

It is by no means an uncommon thing for a teacher to have a very imperfect conception of what he is to accom-

plish—save to keep his pupils busy on some mental—not physical or moral—employment. He is to urge them to constant intellectual activity, and further, he scarcely dares to go in search of his duty, lest he meet it, an armed foe, roaming like the famous Giant Despair, to ensnare and imprison curious pilgrims who wander out of the beaten track. Others do not place their duty so high even as to stimulate mental activity. They reckon it sufficient if they merely satisfy the mental appetite for knowledge, and satisfy it they often do, to satiety and disgust. With them a pupil is to be crammed with facts, principles and conclusions, till many times he utterly loathes all instruction, and hates all attempts to acquire another item of knowledge. These evils spring from an erroneous idea—sometimes from a total misconception of the Aim and Purpose of Education. Let us spend a moment here, for all the Methods of Education are likely to be wrong unless we know the end from the very beginning—partially, at least, and clearly as far as we do apprehend it.

What would you say of a person who should go into a cotton mill and think to control and guide the operations of that hundred-handed machinery, so as to produce the best premium six-corded thread, when he had never seen and had not even in his imagination a conception of such an article? Or worse still, did not understand the first principles of the construction and application of the almost intelligent machines by the aid of which it is to be produced? But a youth of sixteen or twenty will undertake to use the curious mechanism of our common school system, to produce a man perfect as a citizen, and a friend, with probably no adequate notion of what a man is, and certainly, with no definite idea of the arrangements and adaptations of schools and of knowledge or instruction in general, to assist in so noble a work. What should we think of a painter who would undertake to fill up the outline portrait of a surpassingly beautiful female, begun and

designedly left unfinished by the hand of the greatest master, attempting this, not only in the absence of the original, but also in complete destitution of adequate conceptions of womanly loveliness, and that, too, when he is deficient in a knowledge of colors, and in skill both to combine and apply them? Is he then less ridiculous or less culpable, who shall attempt to fill up the outline of human excellence, which the Great Artist has sketched upon the infant soul, when his mental sight has never yet been ravished with a conception of the beauty of the perfect man, the original of which exists for this world only in the ideal; when he knows but little of the infinity of means to be used, and has as yet no adequate skill in their composition or arrangement? It is worse than folly, it is culpable neglect and criminal presumption to begin the work of teaching without careful thought and diligent investigation, both concerning the humanity to be perfected, and the modes of improving it. Let us not fear then to delay a moment and demand what we propose, or rather what we ought to propose in our Educational work.

#### THE AIM OF EDUCATION.

And what is this work but to make perfect men and women, fashioned according to the highest standard of perfection, revealed to us by the happiest efforts of human conception, aided and guided by the thought and experience of all ages, as well as by the aspirations of man's heart, and the inspirations of God's Word? What is it but to take the helpless, almost idiot

“Infant, puling in his nurse's arms,”

and so apply him with instruction, correction, motives, as finally to make him a fit child of God, a lord of all the forces of the material world, a controller of all the mental and moral agencies, within the sphere of his own nature, and a companion and an equal with “the first-born sons of

light?" And who has a definite idea of what such excellence is, and how it is to be attained? Let us not now inquire what man must *do*, but only what he must *be*. And how few of us, if we attempt it, can paint the picture?—What should be the real essence and nature of his soul? what the qualities of his heart? what the impulses of his mind and character, which shall make him tend as naturally toward right doing, and as beautifully to the diligent and efficient discharge of all duties, as spring and sunshine tend toward making the flowers bloom, or the birds sing?—What are the sympathies which man should feel with nature, with his fellow men, with God? What energies should he possess to labor, to suffer, to learn, to love, to aspire? What power of conception, what strength and clearness of insight and foresight, and *outsight*? What force of will to impel himself and overawe others, what pertinacity in all his endeavors, what courage against opposition, what patience among difficulties, what perseverance before obstacles? And, O! what divine enthusiasm in the pursuit of Truth! what entranced conceptions of Beauty! what ravishing joys and transports in view of Right! should fill his mind and sanctify his heart? What glowing emotions should leap up in his soul and fill it with a glory diviner than that with which rainbows fill heaven, whenever his affections turn to God, or his thoughts run on Duty? What an ardent love for Justice, noble as cherubs have for their Maker, should form the very basis of his soul and make him desire unrequited, persecuted labor and toil for right doing, seen by God alone, more than eternal remembrance, emolument and homage for wrong doing, though rapturously applauded by all his fellow mortals?

What is educating a child but so forming and fashioning his nature as to make him possess an intelligence keen, capacious, judicious, discriminating, far reaching, comprehensive as an angel's; a moral sense truthful, vigorous, impartial, ready, loving as the instincts of a seraph, and a will,

prompt, submissive to law, strong in duty, obedient to truth and right as the will of Divinity? and all this in a body of flesh and blood, and in a frail tissue of bones and nerves? and surrounded by innumerable sources of trial, temptation and error? A teacher must know what he wants to make. It is a man full of capacities and perfections; not a mere container of knowledge, or a bundle of susceptibilities, but a power in the world, of truth, love, and duty. And let him never forget that educating is not so much helping or showing the child how, or what *to do*, as in forming and moulding him *TO BE*, impregnating him with the spirit of God, and therefore elevating him to a higher sphere of probation, opportunity and influence. This is first to be known and oftenest pondered,

We can therefore hardly lay too great stress upon the necessity for clear ideas or conceptions of the work to be done, as well as definite notions of the manner of its accomplishment. The tool of the mechanic becomes instinct with skill, and moves in his hand as though it loved the curious workmanship, whenever his mind is informed with a perfect mental model of what he would construct. The pen of the ready writer at his desk, glides gracefully around the curves and loops of the letters which come out before him in magic beauty, whenever they have been first made by his own thought. The style of the engraver forms its etchings on the copper or steel with a precision almost equal to nature that paints the flowers, whenever he himself has first drawn each line of light or shade, of object or figure on the finer metal of his own mind. The chisel of the sculptor chips off all superfluities from the life-like form that sleeps in the marble block, without embarrassment or mistake, whenever he has brought living fire from the heaven of his conception to warm into life the beautiful ideal within his soul. When the painter's pencil does but copy the divinely wrought image stamped upon his own soul, he entrances the world with everlasting beauty. So of the man of letters



—the Essayist—the Novelist—the Orator—the Poet—their power to please—their art to delineate—their charm to move—their skill to enrapture—depend necessarily on the clearness with which they see the end to be reached and the means of approaching it. Let any of these feel their hearts kindled into flame by the glowing sight of perfection in ideas or in language, and their works become living souls. When thoughts breathe beauty's heart-inspiring atmosphere, words will burn. Snow on the crater of an active volcano would as long remain frozen and unsoftened, as would a mind so warmed and filled with heavenly light, rest inactive or refuse to pour forth on the world refreshing streams of pleasure and goodness.

The transcendental doctrine of Plato respecting the separate and independent existence of the forms of all things in an ideal shape—unembodied indeed, but perfect in beauty and excellence—is scarcely a fable in this connection, for we have seen a necessity for these ideas—the types or conceptions of what is possible and desirable; and they must first take definite form in the mind or soul of man, before they can be embodied in architecture, painting, sculpture, poetry, or oratory.

“The poet's eye in a fine phrenzy rolling,  
Doth glance from earth to heaven, from heaven to earth.  
And as imagination bodies forth  
The *forms* of things unknown, the poet's pen  
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing  
A local habitation and a name.”

The safety lamp first had an ideal existence in the mind of Sir Humphrey Davy, as real as it ever afterwards took in the mines of England, before the first one could be made. The telescope was perfect in the conception of Gallileo before the tube and lenses of material substance were fashioned and put together.

The teacher should therefore learn that he and his calling are by no means exempt from these inexorable laws. If he

will accomplish any profitable results for the world, or for his pupils, let him know definitely what he is to produce, and how that is to be done. Let him contemplate the character of the perfect man studying the divine attributes, and learning to love and admire these as much in a tender child as in a mighty monarch or a renowned orator ; and the first step towards the sublime dignity of a philosophic teacher has been rightly taken. It will need but a series of such steps to carry him to a height of influence, and a power of greatness, such as men have never looked upon. The lines that run outward and upward to the stars, are all made up of invisible points, the first of which rests on earth, and knowing exactly its position and connection with the next, the whole series become readily known.

These thoughts as to what education is calculated and expected to accomplish, would lead us to inquire carefully as to the means to be used, the studies presented, the advice given, the rewards offered, the punishments threatened or inflicted, the motives applied, the teachers employed, the companions selected, and the duties required of the children, who are undergoing the process of education. But there is not time to enter upon these grave topics. Their discussion would require far more labor than can now be given to it, and perhaps it is better only to have named them ; and here we leave them for the candid consideration of the reflecting and conscientious.

We are justly proud of our system of common schools. We cheerfully pay large taxes for their support. We inquire how they can be rendered more useful. And in all this no one can reproach us. But do we not need to value them still higher, to support them even more munificently, and to study far more diligently to perfect them ? No interest of any people can exceed the education of their children. Can we satisfy our consciences, if the facilities for their education are not daily increased ?

## THE TABLES.

The following tables form a material part of this report, and need a word of comment. It has already been remarked, that it will not be safe to place any very great reliance upon all their facts. But still in the main they are undoubtedly correct, and a careful examination of their statistics will serve to show, that the interest in the subject of popular education, is gradually deepening and extending in our community.

The first table is constructed to show at a glance the population—the children of the school age—the number at school—the average attendance—the money paid for schools—the number of schools and teachers—the average cost of one scholar's tuition, and the average wages of the teachers in the several towns.

The second table shows from what sources the school monies were received—how much has been voted by the towns for the next year, and some facts respecting the schools the present winter. It will be seen by this table that several of the towns have only voted just so much as, and no more, than will entitle them to draw the money from the State Treasury. Some of these towns make this up to a very liberal amount by rate bills, but this is not following out the idea of the State, which is, if possible, to make free schools. It must necessarily prevent many intelligent and promising children of the poor, from gaining that amount of education, to which their common heritage among us entitles them, and hence deprives the Commonwealth of their educated and valuable services in all time to come ; and must by a stern and inevitable tendency hinder the town from making that progress in power, in virtue, and in influence, which its neighbors are steadily making.

In a subsequent table the towns are classified according to the liberality with which they have provided for their children—not by rate bills, but at the common expense. This list may have the effect to stimulate some which are now

indifferent. It is not made in any spirit of hostility to any one town, but solely with the idea of giving all the means of comparing themselves with others, and of thus finding in what direction they ought to turn their attention, in order to provide for their children what their neighbors have already provided for theirs.

It cannot be possible that any town in the State will be content to know, that its children are enjoying less privileges than those of its neighbors, and that they must therefore grow up to be the hewers of wood and the drawers of water for the others. And this must, by an irresistible law, be the case if they are deprived by any carelessness, by any prompting of avarice, or by any political chicanery, of the glorious advantages of the common school which the public treasury can so liberally support. This thought will be forced upon the attention of all our people by a consideration of these tables, and it is hoped that it will stimulate all to wiser and more thoughtful exertions.

These are some of the topics which ought to be constantly urged upon the attention of the citizens of our State.— They have been presented in a very fragmentary manner; they are argued imperfectly, and written hastily amid the pressure of duties, growing out of the numerous meetings for teachers and friends of education in many of the towns. It is however believed that the good sense of the people will readily understand their importance, and will, while they reflect upon the truths here merely hinted at, pardon the imperfect method of presenting them. In all our attempts and desires to improve our schools, let it be our motto to award credit to honest intentions, to pardon failures to reach and fulfill the whole amount of human duty, and to raise them as speedily as possible to the utmost height of perfection,

I remain your very obedient servant,

ROBERT ALLYN,  
Commissioner Public Schools.

*Abstract of Returns of Public Schools in Rhode Island, for the  
year ending May 1st, 1855.*

TABLE I.

TOWNS.	Total population of all ages in 1850, according to United States Census.	Number of children of school age, i. e., between the ages of 4 and 15.	Number of children un- der 4 years.	Number of children un- der 15—entitled to draw school money.	Estimated population in 1855.
Providence,	41,582	9,150	4,136	13,286	47,727
North Providence,	7,680	1,743	797	2,540	8,832
Smithfield,	11,500	2,701	1,072	3,773	13,225
Cumberland,	6,661	1,472	687	2,159	7,660
Scituate,	4,582	1,021	382	1,404	5,269
Cranston,	4,311	1,072	454	1,526	4,958
Johnston,	2,937	751	278	1,029	3,377
Glocester,	2,872	593	260	853	3,303
Foster,	1,932	457	193	650	2,222
Burrillville,	3,538	822	362	1,184	4,067
Newport,	9,563	2,102	800	2,902	10,997
Portsmouth,	1,833	448	166	614	2,158
Middletown,	830	178	81	259	955
Tiverton,	4,699	1,274	507	1,781	5,604
Little Compton,	1,462	388	100	488	1,681
New Shoreham,	1,262	382	123	505	1,451
Jamestown,	358	62	30	92	412
Kingstown,	3,807	952	363	1,315	4,378
Westerly,	2,763	649	258	907	3,177
North Kingstown,	2,971	715	258	973	3,417
Exeter,	1,634	407	184	591	1,879
Charlestown,	994	252	86	338	1,143
Hopkinton,	2,477	666	236	896	2,847
Richmond,	1,784	416	156	572	2,052
Warwick,	7,740	1,793	608	2,401	8,901
Coventry,	3,620	841	309	1,150	4,163
East Greenwich,	2,358	563	182	745	2,712
West Greenwich,	1,350	311	133	444	1,553
Bristol,	4,616	1,074	404	1,478	5,308
Warren,	3,103	567	232	799	3,469
Barrington,	795	143	60	203	914
	147,545	33,959	13,898	47,857	169,813

*Abstract of Returns of Public Schools in Rhode Island, for the  
year ending May 1st, 1855.*

TABLE I.—CONTINUED.

Estimated number of children between 4 and 15 in 1855.	Estimated number of children under 15 in 1855.	Number of male scholars attending school in 1855.	Number of female school are attending school in 1855.	Total number of scholars attending school in 1855	Average number of ac- tual attendance at school	Total amount of money paid for instruction in schools.	Cost per head of each scholar attending at some time during the year.
10,523	15,389	3,184	3,073	6,257	4,800	11,000 00	6 93
2,004	2,821	1,142	945	2,087	1,329	6,355 89	3 03
3,106	4,339	1,221	1,198	2,419	1,740	9,277 85	3 84
1,693	2,483	685	614	1,299	955	7,576 07	5 83
1,174	1,625	447	311	788	542	3,383 48	4 29
1,223	1,745	468	422	890	666	4,739 39	5 33
844	1,183	365	272	637	441	2,009 20	3 15
682	981	294	223	517	341	2,751 83	5 32
526	747	289	216	505	342	1,596 83	3 16
945	1,361	391	311	702	459	1,998 42	2 85
2,417	3,337	425	433	858	615	9,933 62	11 58
515	706	198	136	334	231	2,115 23	6 33
202	298	100	94	194	100	1,135 71	5 85
1,464	2,048	682	557	1,239	692	4,744 81	3 83
446	561	201	149	350	183	1,953 07	5 58
439	581	227	139	366	189	885 78	2 42
71	105	34	20	54	40	276 13	5 10
1,092	1,512	443	355	799	572	2,661 10	3 33
746	1,043	343	304	647	481	2,593 25	4 01
822	1,119	337	230	567	391	2,386 70	4 21
468	680	207	149	356	213	1,419 20	3 99
290	389	171	166	337	219	751 70	2 23
766	1,030	330	264	594	388	2,214 94	3 54
478	658	241	180	421	250	1,318 04	3 13
2,062	2,711	683	614	1,297	914	3,635 61	2 65
967	1,323	438	276	714	458	1,780 86	2 46
647	857	184	111	295	226	877 89	3 04
358	511	130	123	243	171	797 27	3 28
1,235	1,659	392	311	703	690	6,436 03	9 16
642	919	166	153	319	276	2,449 25	7 68
164	233	60	35	95	74	620 00	6 53
39,011	54,954	14,478	12,404	26,883	18,988	131,675 15	4 90

*Abstract of Returns of Public Schools in Rhode Island, for the  
year ending May 1st, 1855.*

TABLE I.—CONTINUED.

TOWNS.	Cost per head of each scholar according to average attendance.	Whole number of teachers employed.	Number of Male Teachers.	Number of Female Teachers.	Average Wages per month of Male Teachers, including board.	The Average Wages per month of Female Teachers, including board.
Providence,	9 03	113	12	101	90 00	23 00
North Providence,	4 78	32	8	24	47 05	18 60
Smithfield,	5 33	67	21	46	33 00	18 00
Cumberland,	7 92	26	7	19	39 43	18 42
Scituate,	6 24	18	14	4	29 14	20 25
Cranston,	7 12	23	6	17	36 00	21 00
Johnston,	4 56	14	7	7	28 38	17 52
Glocester,	8 08	22	9	13	26 18	18 13
Foster,	4 42	31	14	17	21 67	14 15
Burrillville,	4 35	21	8	13	41 20	16 09
Newport,	16 15	20	3	17	50 72	18 46
Portsmouth,	9 11	8	6	2	30 25	17 30
Middletown,	11 36	10	5	5	30 00	17 00
Tiverton,	6 86	30	14	16	31 50	17 00
Little Compton,	10 02	18	10	8	32 34	17 45
New Shoreham,	4 69	5	4	1	27 00	19 00
Jamestown,	6 88	3	2	1	28 50	18 00
Kingstown,	4 66	38	19	19	25 00	15 00
Westerly,	5 39	15	6	9	29 00	20 00
North Kingstown,	6 05	16	10	6	28 09	12 44
Exeter,	6 66	11	10	1	24 00	21 00
Charlestown,	3 42	11	8	3	27 86	16 00
Hopkinton,	5 68	12	11	1	30 12	17 00
Richmond,	5 27	15	13	2	17 09	21 50
Warwick,	3 98	26	11	15	34 00	14 60
Coventry,	3 89	23	15	8	27 33	21 72
East Greenwich,	3 88	6	3	3	25 00	20 00
West Greenwich,	4 66	12	11	1	24 36	18 00
Bristol,	9 31	18	5	13	46 50	16 63
Warren,	8 87	9	2	7	50 34	17 25
Barrington,	8 36	6	1	5	37 00	16 25
	6 93	679	275	404	33 65	17 96

*Abstract of Returns of Public Schools in Rhode Island, for the  
year ending May 1st, 1855.*

TABLE II.

Apportionment from the State Treasury of \$35- 000, according to popu- lation under 15.	Apportionment from the State Treasury of \$15- 000, according to num- ber of districts in each town.	Total apportioned from State Treasury to towns.	Received by the Towns from Town Taxes.	Received from Rate Bills and District Taxes.	Received by Towns from Registry and Military Taxes.
9,716 05	863 72	10,579 77	30,000 00		2,756 59
1,857 50	392 60	2,250 10	3,500 00		299 00
2,759 19	1,374 10	4,133 29	4,500 00		644 56
1,578 87	785 20	2,364 07	2,000 00	3,000 00	212 00
1,026 74	706 68	1,733 42	900 00	522 26	217 80
1,115 96	431 86	1,547 82	2,500 00		273 60
752 51	510 38	1,262 89	500 00		163 00
623 80	588 90	1,212 70	200 00	1,008 42	226 21
475 35	745 94	1,221 29	113 18	238 27	130 94
865 86	628 16	1,494 02	600 00	30 00	104 00
2,122 23	196 30	2,318 53	6,500 00		285 00
449 02	274 82	723 84	300 00	1,000 39	91 00
189 41	196 30	385 71	200 00	510 00	10 00
1,302 44	667 42	1,969 86	1,500 00	49 63	217 01
356 87	392 60	749 47	250 00	924 62	28 98
369 31	196 30	565 61	100 00	70 18	150 00
67 28	78 52	145 80	25 00	87 87	17 26
961 69	824 46	1,786 15	460 00	269 10	299 08
663 29	471 12	1,134 41	200 00	1,197 66	92 05
711 56	588 90	1,300 46	450 00	574 15	215 42
432 20	471 12	903 32	144 06	61 27	123 65
247 18	274 82	522 00	100 00	321 18	73 92
655 24	471 12	1,126 36	140 81	836 15	101 62
418 30	510 38	928 98	200 00		189 36
1,755 86	588 90	2,344 76	1,000 00		352 40
841 08	706 68	1,547 68	200 24	56 19	251 15
544 82	196 30	741 12	181 60		139 17
324 70	471 12	795 82	100 00		106 36
1,080 86	157 04	1,237 90	3,800 00	800 00	85 12
583 31	117 78	701 09	1,700 00		56 03
148 45	117 78	266 23	200 00	153 77	11 13
34,996 85	14,997 32	49,994 17	62,564 89	11,721 11	7,923 41



*Abstract of Returns of Public Schools in Rhode Island, for the  
year ending May 1st, 1855.*

TABLE II.—CONTINUED.

TOWNS.	Income of other Funds, and from all other sources.	Money remaining in the Town Treasury unexpended from last year's appropriation	Total Amount of School Monies derived from all sources.	Amounts expended for instruction during the year.
Providence,			43,336 36	41,000 00
North Providence,		306 79	6,330 89	6,355 89
Smithfield,			9,277 85	9,277 85
Cumberland,			7,576 07	7,576 07
Scituate,		389 72	3,773 20	3,383 48
Cranston,		427 97	4,749 39	4,739 39
Johnston,		236 06	2,161 95	2,009 20
Glocester,		173 76	2,821 09	2,751 83
Foster,		188 94	1,892 62	1,596 83
Burrillville,		398 66	2,626 58	1,998 42
Newport,	125 75		9,229 28	9,933 62
Portsmouth,			2,115 23	2,115 23
Middletown,	40 00	9 00	1,154 71	1,135 71
Tiverton,	1,092 22	255 45	5,084 17	4,733 81
Little Compton,			1,953 07	1,943 97
New Shoreham,			885 79	885 79
Jamestown,			275 93	275 93
Kingstown,		160 09	2,974 42	2,661 10
Westerly,		19 13	2,643 25	2,593 25
North Kingstown,	30 36	505 54	3,075 93	2,386 70
Exeter,		187 02	1,419 32	1,419 32
Charlestown,		23 76	1,040 86	751 70
Hopkinton,			2,214 94	2,214 94
Richmond,			1,318 04	1,318 04
Warwick,		326 50	4,023 66	3,635 61
Coventry,		227 50	2,282 82	1,780 86
East Greenwich,	180 50	71 82	1,314 21	877 89
West Greenwich,		394 79	1,396 97	797 27
Bristol,	510 45	2 56	6,435 03	6,436 03
Warren,	11 75	113 41	2,582 28	2,449 25
Barrington,			631 13	620 00
	1,991 03	4,418 43	138,613 04	131,675 08

*Abstract of Returns of Public Schools in Rhode Island, for the  
year ending May 1st, 1855.*

TABLE II.—CONTINUED.

Amount expended in building and repairing School Houses.	Apportionment from the State Treasury of \$8,- 000, for the year ending May 1, 1856.	Apportionment from the State Treasury of \$15,- 000, for the year ending May 1, 1856.	Total to be apportioned from State Treasury for the year ending May 1, 1856.	Voted to be raised by Towns in Town Three, for the year ending May 1, 1856.
2,000 00	9,716 05	859 32	10,575 37	41,000 00
619 93	1,857 50	390 60	2,258 10	4,500 00
157 88	2,759 15	1,367 10	4,126 19	4,500 00
40 00	1,578 87	781 20	2,360 06	2,000 00
40 97	1,026 74	742 14	1,768 88	900 00
	1,115 96	429 66	1,545 62	2,500 00
500 00	752 51	507 78	1,260 29	500 00
800 00	623 80	585 90	1,209 70	200 00
45 00	475 35	742 14	1,217 49	113 18
	865 80	624 96	1,490 82	600 00
574 64	2,122 25	195 30	2,317 53	8,000 00
400 00	449 05	273 42	722 44	300 00
10 00	189 41	195 50	384 71	200 00
7,500 00	1,302 44	703 08	2,005 52	1,750 00
	356 88	390 60	747 47	250 00
	369 31	195 30	564 61	150 00
	67 28	78 12	145 40	25 00
900 00	961 69	820 26	1,781 95	400 00
550 00	663 29	468 72	1,132 01	200 00
	711 56	585 90	1,297 46	450 00
350 00	432 20	468 72	900 92	144 06
	247 18	273 42	520 60	100 00
	655 24	468 72	1,123 96	140 81
	418 30	507 78	926 08	200 00
	1,755 86	585 80	2,341 76	1,500 00
206 16	841 00	703 08	1,544 08	200 24
25 00	544 82	195 30	740 12	181 60
25 00	324 70	468 72	793 42	100 00
1,200 00	1,080 86	156 24	1,237 10	4,000 00
56 98	583 31	117 18	700 49	1,700 00
	148 45	117 18	265 63	200 00
16,001 56	34,996 85	14,999 04	49,995 89	77,004 89

*Abstract of Returns of Public Schools in Rhode Island, for the year ending May 1st, 1855.*

TABLE II.—CONCLUDED.

TOWNS.	Number of School Districts in the State.		Total number of School Houses in the State	The whole number of Schools kept during the Winter 1853-54.	Whole number of Male Teachers employed in each town.	Whole number of Female Teachers employed in each town.	Average Wages per month, of male teachers, including board.	Average Wages per month, of female teachers, including board.
Providence,	23	24	46	10	108	100	30	
North Providence,	10	11	21	10	18	45	1-4	19 1-4
Smithfield,	35	35	35	21	26	35	18	
Cumberland,	20	20	16	5	15	40	1-2	18 3-4
Scituate,	19	19	19	16	5	20	16	
Cranston,	11	11	13	6	8	35	19	
Johnston,	12	13	16	6	16	36	1-2	23 1-3
Glocester,	15	15	14	12	9	25	18 1-2	
Foster,	18	16	18	15	3	26	1-3	18 4-5
Burrillville,	16	16	16	2	14	26	17	
Newport,	5	4	17	3	20	54	1-6	18 1-4
Portsmouth,	7	8	7	6	2	31	1-2	18
Middletown,	5	5	5	5	00	30	00	
Tiverton,	18	19	21	12	11	33	18	
Little Compton,	10	10	10	9	1	22	2-3	22
New Shoreham,	5	5	5	4	1	31	18	
Jamestown,	2	2	2	2	0	23	00	
Kingstown,	21	21	21	17	4	20	15	
Westerly,	13	14	15	11	4	40	20	
North Kingstown,	15	14	12	10	2	28	1-12	16 3-4
Exeter,	12	12	12	12	00	24	00	
Charlestown,	7	6	7	7	00	28	00	
Hopkinton,	12	12	12	12	00	28	00	
Richmond,	13	13	12	8	4	27	24	
Warwick,	15	14	19	9	11	36	1-3	19 1-6
Coventry,	18	17	16	11	5	27	1-2	18 1-4
East Greenwich,	5	5	7	4	3	30	20	
West Greenwich,	12	4	12	11	1	25	22	
Bristol,	4	8	13	5	13	45	28 1-2	
Warren,	3	2	5	3	5	53	1-3	26 1-4
Barrington,	3	3	3	0	3	00	20	
	384	378	447	262	282			

*Tabular Statistics, showing the condition of the Schools from 1850 to 1855.*

TABLE III.

	1850	1851	1852	1853	1854	1855
Total Number of Scholars,	33,958	34,537	35,605	36,706	37,841	39,001
Whole Number reported as in Schools,	24,743	26,654	26,200	25,946	25,868	26,883
Average Attendance at School,	13,282	19,719	18,772	18,698	19,898	18,988
Money expended for Instruction,	96,000 10	94,471 96	98 135 44	125,004 04	103,049 59	131,675 15
Cost per Scholar enrolled,	3 88	3 54	3 75	4 82	3 57	4 90
Cost per Scholar actually attending,	7 23	4 98	5 18	6 69	5 13	6 93
Percentage of Scholars in school.	.73	.77	.71	.71	.68	.69
Percentage of Average Attendance,	.39	.87	.53	.51	.53	.48

*Tabular Statement of the amount each town has raised by vote on its own property ; how much this is for every child of the school-age in the town ; how much for each one attending ; and, how much for the average attendance.*

TABLE IV.

TOWNS.	Amount raised by town tax.	Amount per Child between the ages of 6 & 16	Amount per Scholar in school.	Amount per average attendance.	Cost per Scholar.	Cost per average.
Providence,	30,000 00	2 85	4 79	6 25	6 93	9 03
North Providence,	3,500 00	1 75	1 68	2 63	3 04	4 78
Smithfield,	4,500 00	1 45	1 86	2 59	3 84	5 33
Cumberland,	2,000 00	1 18	1 54	2 09	5 83	7 92
Scituate,	900 00	77	1 14	1 85	4 29	6 24
Cranston,	2,500 00	2 06	2 81	3 75	5 33	7 12
Johnston,	500 00	59	78	1 13	3 15	4 56
Glocester,	200 00	29	38	59	5 32	8 08
Foster,	113 18	22	23	33	3 16	4 42
Burrillville,	600 00	63	85	1 31	2 85	4 35
Newport,	6,500 00	2 65	7 56	10 06	11 58	16 15
Portsmouth,	300 00	58	87	1 30	6 33	9 11
Middletown,	200 00	99	1 03	2 00	5 85	11 36
Tiverton,	1,500 00	1 02	1 21	2 17	3 83	6 86
Little Compton,	250 00	56	71	1 31	5 58	10 02
New Shoreham,	110 00	23	28	53	2 42	4 69
Jamestown,	25 00	35	46	63	5 10	6 88
Kingstown,	460 00	42	58	80	3 33	4 66
Westerly,	200 00	27	31	42	4 01	5 39
North Kingstown,	450 00	55	89	1 13	4 21	6 05
Exeter,	144 06	31	40	67	3 99	6 66
Charlestown,	100 00	34	29	46	2 23	3 42
Hopkinton,	140 81	18	24	36	3 54	5 68
Richmond,	200 00	42	48	80	3 13	5 27
Warwick,	1,000 00	48	77	1 09	2 65	3 98
Coventry,	200 24	21	28	42	2 46	3 89
East Greenwich,	181 60	28	64	80	3 04	3 88
West Greenwich,	100 00	26	41	58	3 28	4 66
Bristol,	3,800 00	3 18	5 41	5 37	9 16	9 31
Warren,	1,700 00	2 65	5 64	6 16	7 68	8 87
Barrington,	200 00	1 22	2 10	2 70	6 53	8 36
Whole State,	62,564 89	1 60	2 40	3 29	4 90	6 93

*Tabular rank of each town according to the money raised by town tax.*

TABLE V.

TOWNS.	Amount per scholar.	TOWNS.	Amount per scholar.
1 Bristol,	3 18	16 North Kingstown,	55
2 Providence,	2 85	17 Warwick,	48
3 Warren,	2 65	18 Richmond,	42
3 Newport,	2 65	18 Kingstown,	42
4 Cranston,	2 06	19 Jamestown,	35
5 North Providence,	1 75	20 Charlestown,	34
6 Smithfield,	1 45	21 Exeter,	31
7 Barrington,	1 22	22 Gloucester,	29
8 Cumberland,	1 18	23 East Greenwich,	28
9 Tiverton,	1 02	24 Westerly,	27
10 Middletown,	99	25 West Greenwich,	26
11 Scituate,	77	26 New Shoreham,	23
12 Burrillville,	63	27 Foster,	22
13 Johnston,	59	28 Coventry,	21
14 Portsmouth,	58	29 Hopkinton,	19
15 Little Compton,	56		

*Tabular rank of each town according to the amount it has raised for every scholar in school.*

TABLE VI.

TOWNS.	Amount per scholar in school.	TOWNS.	Amount per scholar in school.
1 Newport,	7 56	17 Warwick,	77
2 Warren,	5 64	18 Little Compton,	71
3 Bristol,	5 41	19 East Greenwich,	62
4 Providence,	4 79	20 Kingstown,	58
5 Cranston,	2 81	21 Richmond,	48
6 Barrington,	2 10	22 Jamestown,	46
7 Smithfield,	1 86	23 West Greenwich,	41
8 North Providence,	1 68	24 Exeter,	40
9 Cumberland,	1 54	25 Gloucester,	38
10 Tiverton,	1 21	26 Westerly,	31
11 Scituate,	1 14	27 Charlestown,	29
12 Middletown,	1 03	28 Coventry,	28
13 North Kingstown,	89	28 New Shoreham,	28
14 Portsmouth,	87	29 Hopkinton,	24
15 Burrillville,	85	30 Foster,	23
16 Johnston,	78		

*Tabular rank of towns according to the cost per scholar of the money raised by town tax.*

TABLE VII.

TOWNS.	According to the average attendance.	TOWNS.	According to the average attendance.
1 Newport,	10 06	15 Johnston,	1 13
2 Providence,	6 25	16 Warwick,	1 09
3 Warren,	6 16	17 East Greenwich,	80
4 Bristol,	5 37	17 Richmond,	80
5 Cranston,	3 75	17 Kingstown,	80
6 Barrington,	2 70	18 Exeter,	67
7 North Providence,	2 63	19 Jamestown,	63
8 Smithfield,	2 59	20 Gloucester,	59
9 Tiverton,	2 17	21 West Greenwich,	58
10 Cumberland,	2 09	22 New Shoreham,	53
11 Middletown,	2 00	23 Charlestown,	46
12 Scituate,	1 85	24 Westerly,	42
13 Burrillville,	1 31	24 Coventry,	42
13 Little Compton,	1 31	25 Hopkinton,	36
14 Portsmouth,	1 30	26 Foster,	33
15 North Kingstown,	1 13		

*Tabular rank of towns according to the average amount raised by town tax per scholar.*

TABLE VIII.

TOWNS.	Amount raised per scholar.	TOWNS.	Amount raised per scholar.
1 Newport,	11 58	17 Smithfield,	3 84
2 Bristol,	9 16	18 Tiverton,	3 83
3 Warren,	7 68	19 Hopkinton,	3 54
4 Providence,	6 93	20 Kingstown,	3 33
5 Barrington,	6 53	21 West Greenwich,	3 28
6 Portsmouth,	6 33	22 Foster,	3 16
7 Middletown,	5 85	23 Johnston,	3 15
8 Cumberland,	5 83	24 Richmond,	3 13
9 Little Compton,	5 58	25 North Providence,	3 04
10 Cranston,	5 33	25 East Greenwich,	3 04
11 Gloucester,	5 32	26 Burrillville,	2 85
12 Jamestown,	5 10	27 Warwick,	2 65
13 Scituate,	4 29	28 Coventry,	2 46
14 North Kingstown,	4 21	29 New Shoreham,	2 42
15 Westerly,	4 01	30 Charlestown,	2 23
16 Exeter,	3 99		

*Tabular rank of towns according to the amount raised by town tax, per average attendance.*

TABLE IX.

TOWNS.		Amount raised pr. scholar actually in attendance.	TOWNS.		Amount raised pr. scholar actually in attendance.
1	Newport,	16 15	17	Hopkinton,	5 68
2	Middletown,	11 36	18	Westerly,	5 39
3	Little Compton,	10 02	19	Smithfield,	5 32
4	Bristol,	9 31	20	Richmond,	5 27
5	Portsmouth,	9 11	21	North Providence,	4 78
6	Providence,	9 03	22	New Shoreham,	4 69
7	Warren,	8 87	23	Kingstown,	4 66
8	Barrington,	8 36	23	West Greenwich,	4 66
9	Glocester,	8 08	24	Johnston,	4 56
10	Cumberland,	7 92	25	Foster,	4 42
11	Cranston,	7 12	26	Burrillville,	4 35
12	Jamestown,	6 88	27	Warwick,	3 98
13	Tiverton,	6 86	28	Coventry,	3 89
14	Exeter,	6 66	29	East Greenwich,	3 88
15	Scituate,	6 24	30	Charlestown,	3 42
16	North Kingstown,	6 05			



## FINANCIAL.

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*Account of Expenses for Lectures, Reported to the General Assembly According to Act of January 1854 :—*

Expense of Lectures and Circulars, and Use of Church and Hall, at the Meeting of the Rhode Island Institute of Instruction, in Providence, January 25 and 26, 1855,	\$125 00
Expense of Lectures in Newport County, March 13—18, 1855,	87 50
Expense of Lectures in Kent and Washington Counties, March 24—29, 1855,	87 50
Expense of the Meeting of County Inspectors, in Providence, June 23,	28 10
Expense of same body, July 21,	20 50
Expense of Lectures in Tiverton and Scituate, Oct. 22—Nov. 3,	50 00
Expense of Lectures in Exeter, Dec. 6 and 7,	50 00
Expense of Lectures in Wakefield, Dec. 20 and 22,	51 40
Total Appropriation,	<hr/> \$500 00

Respectfully submitted,

ROBERT ALLYN,

Commissioner of Public Schools.



*Account of Expenses of Teachers' Institutes, Reported to the  
General Assembly, According to Section 58th of School  
Law:—*

Total Amount of Appropriation,	\$300 00
Paid for Circulars and Advertising,	\$13 25
Commissioner's Traveling Expenses,	11 37
Paid for Stationery,	8 43
Paid for Lecturers' travel to Tiverton,	18 00
“ “ “ “ to Scituate,	7 50
Paid D. P. Colburn, Lecturer,	62 50
Paid Rev. Mr. Vail, “	21 25
Paid T. S. Lambert, M. D., Lecturer,	21 75
Paid A. M. S. Carpenter, “	31 63
Paid Prof. S. S. Greene, “	24 00
Paid Wm. H. Farrar, “	12 50
Paid R. W. Reynolds, “	3 75
Paid O. S. Spencer, “	41 50
Paid D. B. Hagar, “	5 00
Paid R. S. Fielden, “	9 50
“ d Rev. D. Leach, “	5 50
Paid S. A. Potter, “	2 57
<hr/>	
Total Appropriation,	\$300 00

Respectfully submitted,

ROBERT ALLYN,  
Commissioner of Public Schools.

*Account of Monies Expended for State Normal School, out of  
Appropriation for 1854 :—*

Paid to order of Hon. E. R. Potter prior to Nov. 1,	
1854,	\$1,762 81
Nov. 8. Paid for Advertising Terms in Temperance Advocate,	\$3 00
“ 25. Paid for Advertising in New- port Mercury,	2 50
“ 27. Ordered C. M. Clarke third of Salary as Teacher of Music,	25 00
Dec. 5. Paid for Advertising in Wester- ly Echo,	1 12
“ 14. Paid for Advertising in Pendu- lum,	2 00
“ 15. Ordered A. Sumner, part Sal- ary,	12 50
“ 15. Ordered S. S. Greene's half Sal- ary as Lecturer,	150 00
“ 30. Ordered D. P. Colburn's quar- ter Salary as Principal,	300 00
“ “ Ordered A. Sumner's balance of quarter Salary as Assistant.	175 00
1855.	
Jan. 9. Paid for Advertising in Provi- dence Journal,	1 75
“ “ Ordered for Furniture A. B. Car- ry & Son,	13 75
“ 11. Ordered Rent of Rooms quarter T. D. Cook,	187 50
“ “ Paid for Advertising in Woon- socket Patriot,	1 25
“ 17. Ordered George H. Whitney for Books,	7 60
Feb. 1. Ordered Knowles, Anthony & Co. for printing,	12 00
Carried forward,	———— 2,657 78

<b>Brought forward,</b>	<b>\$2,657 78</b>
“ 21. Paid for Advertising in Post & Herald,	2 00
“ “ Ordered Bill for Work L. D. Littlefield,	6 17
“ 23. Ordered R. I. Schoolmaster for Advertising,	10 00
<b>Mch 8.</b> Ordered S. S. Greene's half year's Salary,	150 00
“ 19. Ordered D. P. Colburn's Salary in part,	174 05
<b>Total appropriation for 1854,</b>	<b>\$3000 00</b>

**Appropriation for 1855.**

1855.

<b>Mar. 9.</b>	Ordered balance of D. P. Colburn's salary to Mar. 31,	<b>\$200 95</b>
“ “	Ordered A. Sumner's salary to Mar. 31, 1855,	187 50
“ 21.	Ordered C. M. Clarke's salary, one-third year,	25 00
“ 27.	Ordered for Periodicals,	25 00
<b>Apr. 10.</b>	Ordered Rent of Rooms to Rev. T. D. Cook, 1st quarter,	187 50
<b>May 1.</b>	Ordered Ray Spink's bill for joiner's work,	28 01
“ 18.	Ordered to Com'er. for Books,	150 00
<b>June 11.</b>	Ordered to Com'er. for Books,	1 69

[Expended as follows, viz :

Bought of Magee, Boston, \$43 95

“ Gladding, Prov., 27 19

“ Whitney, “ 22 27

“ Colburn, “ 40 00

“ Colton, N. Y., 13 37

Expenses of Freight, &amp;c., 5 91—\$151 69]

**Carried forward,** **805 65**

Brought forward,	\$805 65
June 25. Ordered to G. H. Whitney for Books,	33 50
“ 30. Ordered to D. P. Colburn, salary, 2d quarter,	375 00
“ “ Ordered to A. Sumner, salary, 2d quarter,	187 50
“ “ Ordered to T. D. Cook, Rent,	187 50
“ “ “ Emma T. Brown, salary, 2d quarter,	35 00
“ “ Ordered to Hannah W. Goodwin, salary, 2d quarter,	35 00
July 9. Ordered to S. S. Greene, salary, 2d quarter.	75 00
“ 10. Ordered to C. M. Clarke, salary and use of Pianoforte,	70 00
“ 18. Ordered to Knowles, Anthony & Co., Printing,	9 50
“ 27. Ordered for Advertising,	6 00
Aug. 7. “ to Colburn, for Encyclopedia,	4 40
Sept. 3. Ordered to P. Grinnell & Sons, for sundries,	97
“ 12. Order to A. Sumner, salary in full,	125 00
“ 26. Order to T. D. Cook, rent, 3d quarter,	187 50
“ 27. Order to D. P. Colburn, salary, 3d quarter,	375 00
“ “ Order to D. P. Colburn, advertising and express,	3 25
“ 29. Order to S. S. Greene, salary, 3d quarter,	75 00
Oct. 6. Order to D. P. Colburn, for writing master,	8 00
Carried forward,	————\$2,598 77

<b>Brought forward,</b>	<b>\$2,598 77</b>
“ “ Order to C. Ackerman, binding books,	26 12
“ 11. Order to H. W. Goodwin, salary, 3d quarter,	13 63
“ “ Order to E. P. Brown, salary, 3d quarter,	10 90
“ 16. Order to G. H. Whitney, for Books,	22 11
Nov. 9 & 10. Order to Commissioner to pay advertising in Newport Mercury, Pawtucket Chronicle, E. Greenwich Pendulum, and Westerly Echo,	4 00
“ 10. Order to Commissioner to pay Maps,	75
“ 24. Order to R. S. Fielden, 1-3 salary as Teacher,	25 00
“ 26. Order to D. P. Colburn, to pay advertising,	1 00
“ “ Order to D. P. Colburn, to Miss Saunders salary to Nov.,	40 00
“ 30. Order to Henry Baker, to pay balance for Piano,	209 99
Dec. 3. Order to E. S. Winsor, for books,	6 93
“ 10. Order to C. M. Clarke, for use of Piano,	5 00
“ “ Order to J. B. Tallman, for Books,	11 25
“ “ Order to Gladding & Brother, Books,	14 68
“ 22. Order to D. P. Colburn's 4th quarter's salary,	375 00
<b>Carried forward,</b>	<b>—————\$3,365 13</b>

Brought forward, \$3,365 13

" "	Order to D. P. Colburn, Miss Saunders' salary, to Feb. 1, 1856,	40 00
" "	Order to R. S. Fielden, salary to April, 1856,	25 00
" "	Order to S. S. Greene, salary, 4th quarter,	75 00
" "	Order to H. W. Goodwin, salary, 4th quarter,	62 50
" "	Order to E. T. Brown, salary, 4th quarter,	75 00
" "	Order to T. D. Cook, rent, 4th quarter,	187 50
" "	Order to D. P. Colburn, to pay Spink for Bookcase, &c.,	87 50
" "	Order to R. I. Schoolmaster, advertising,	7 50

Total, \$3,925 13

Appropriation, \$4,000 00

Expended, 3,925 13

Balance, \$74 87

Respectfully submitted,

ROBERT ALLYN,

Commissioner of Public Schools.

*Account of Items of Expenditure of the Appropriation made  
June 1855, for Books and Apparatus for the State Normal  
School.*

Sept. 10.	Paid Ide & Dutton Bill of Books, Maps, Charts and Globes,	\$93 27
" "	Paid Expenses of Mr. Colburn and the Commissioner to Bos- ton to purchase the above, and freight on the boxes,	13 75
Sept. 18.	Paid Hickling, Swan & Brown, for Books,	18 75
" "	Paid N. Tillinghast and D. P. Colburn, for Books,	8 44
" 25.	Paid J. H. Colton & Co., for At- las and Expense,	15 67
" "	Paid Ivison & Phinney, for Books,	33 34
Oct. 11.	Paid D. P. Colburn, for Books,	18 75
Nov. 30.	Paid Henry Baker in part, for Pianoforte,	98 01

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Total Appropriation, \$300 00

Respectfully submitted,

ROBERT ALLYN,

Commissioner of Public Schools.



*The following are the Beneficiaries supported, in part, at the State's expense, at the American Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb, in Hartford, Connecticut.*

George Gavit, of Westerly, entered May 1850, at the age of 10 years.

Wm. E. Slocum, of Cumberland, admitted September 1852, aged — years.

Agnes McLaughlin, of North Providence, admitted September 1852, aged — years.

Mary E. Wilber, of Little Compton, admitted September 1855, aged — years.

Patience E. Slocum, of Cumberland, admitted September 1844, aged 11 years.

Levi A. Lester, of Providence, admitted April 1855, aged 12 years.

The following orders have been given for their expenses to the Treasurer of the Institution :—

An order for their expenses to April 1, 1855,	\$233 33
“ “ “ “ “ to Oct. 1, “	250 00
Total,	<hr/> \$483 33

*The following are the Beneficiaries supported, in part, at the State's expense, at the Perkins Asylum and Massachusetts Institution for the Blind, in Boston.*

James H. Graham, of Newport, admitted May 1850.

Elizabeth Denely, Kingstown, admitted Oct. 1851.

Lucy Ross, of North Providence, admitted Dec. 1852.

Henry S. Fildes, of Providence, admitted Sept. 1855, aged 14 years.

Julia Boyden, of Providence, admitted Sept. 1855, aged 14 years.

Owing to some unexplained cause, the Commissioner has received no bill, for the expenses of these beneficiaries, though he has received a satisfactory account of their progress. He has therefore drawn no order upon the General Treasurer, for their support.

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For the support of beneficiaries from the Fund to support Idiotic and Feeble Minded Youth, there have been two orders drawn.

One for the support of James Lee, from

Oct. 1, 1853, to April 1, 1855                      \$150 00

And one for the support of James M.

Brooks, from June 1, 1854, to June 1,  
1855,    100 00

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Total for Idiotic Youth,                                      250 00

Total for Deaf and Dumb,                                      483 33

---

Total,    \$733 33

Appropriation,    \$2500 00

Amount expended,    733 33

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Balance,    \$1766 67

Respectfully submitted,

ROBERT ALLYN,

Commissioner Public Schools.

**NOTE.**

**The Expenses of the Normal School, as stated at the bottom of page 4, should be \$3,925 13.**

APPENDIX.

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SCHOOL COMMITTEES' REPORTS.

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ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
OF THE CITY OF PROVIDENCE.

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*To the Honorable the City Council of the City of Providence :*

The School Committee required by ordinance to make report to the City Council of the condition of the Public Schools, present the following as that Report.

The act passed by the General Assembly at its last January session, increasing the number of the School Committee, secured a larger attendance upon the examinations of the several schools than has been customary for some time past; and the interest in the schools manifested by the new members is convincing proof to the Committee, that the change in the law made at their request, can but produce beneficial results upon the school system.

The organization of the Committee took place on the 17th of April last, when Hon. Edward P. Knowles was elected President, and Charles H. Parkhurst, Esq., Secretary. The usual Standing and District Com-

mittees were appointed, and most of the schools have been visited during the term by one or more of each Committee.

By the reports of the Superintendent at each quarterly meeting, the Committee are better able to judge of the standard of each school, and of the proficiency it has made, than heretofore; as the several schools are subjected to a rigid examination by the Superintendent, in the different studies pursued by them. The per-centage of correct answers being carefully noticed, the rank of a school is soon determined; and by a comparison of these results from term to term, the progress is ascertained. Under the old method of visiting by the Committee during the term and on examination day, though the general appearance of the scholars, their promptness in recitation, and the discipline of the school, could be noted; yet no comparison between schools could be instituted so that a correct judgment of their excellence could be formed.

By the examination of the Superintendent a sure result is obtained, one that can be relied upon for its correctness.

From these examinations the Committee are satisfied that the standard of our schools has been preserved, and under the care of faithful teachers will long continue to afford an ample return for the labor and expense bestowed.

The number of scholars admitted the past year, shows an increase over that of the previous year, as may be seen by the following table:

The whole number admitted during Summer			
term of 1853, was	5,697	1854,	5,973
During the Fall term of 1853,	5,838	1854,	6,264
During the Winter term of 1853-4,	5,962	1854-5,	6,172
During the Spring term of 1854,	6,267	1855,	6,620
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Average for 1853-4,	5,941	1854-5,	6,257

By reference to the Report of this Committee for the year 1850, we find that the number of scholars in *attendance* upon the schools that year, was six thousand, three hundred and fifty-three, or nearly one hundred more than the whole number *admitted* the past year.

This apparent decrease in the number of children attending our Public Schools, notwithstanding the large increase in our population, may be accounted for by the fact that several hundred children have been withdrawn to attend upon the Roman Catholic Schools.

In view of these facts, your Committee recommend that your honorable body require the persons engaged in taking the census of the city at the present time, to ascertain the number of children between the ages of five and sixteen years, who attend the Public Schools; the num-

## APPENDIX.

ber that attend the private schools ; the number who do not attend any school ; and also the number of foreign parentage.

The following table will show at a glance, first, the number of scholars admitted ; second, the average number belonging to the school ; third, the average attendance ; fourth, the average absence ; and fifth, the per cent. of absence.

	Number admitted.	Average belonging.	Average attendance.	Average absence.	Per cent absence.
Summer term, 1854,	5,973	5,077.3	4,128.3	949.	18.06
Fall term, 1854,	6,264	5,514.9	4,848.1	666.8	12.07
Winter term, 1854-5,	6,172	5,505.4	4,578.8	926.6	16.08
Spring term, 1855,	6,620	5,650.	4,952.8	697.2	8.22
Total average,	6,257	5,436.9	4,627.	809.9	14.09

It will be seen by the above table, that while the whole number admitted, will average six thousand, two hundred and fifty-seven ; yet the whole number attending, will average only four thousand, six hundred and twenty-seven ; making a difference of sixteen hundred and thirty, or an average absence daily of eight hundred and nine and nine-tenths ; being fourteen and nine-tenths per cent.

Do the parents and guardians of our scholars consider the great injury caused to our whole system by this large per cent. of absence We fear not. Our late Superintendent, in the last Annual Report, alluded to this, and our present officer has at greater length examined the matter. We shall therefore embody his Report as a part of this Report.

Another grade of schools to meet the wants of pupils who cannot attend regularly, has engaged the attention of the Committee. Upon a full discussion of the matter, they have decided to make application to your honorable body, for such an amendment of the " Ordinance in relation to Public Schools," as will meet this want.

The subject of truancy has long been considered by the Superintendent and the Committee, as an evil rapidly increasing in this community. Boys, by the neglect of their parents, or from other causes, are allowed to remain in the streets, preparing rapidly for a life of vice and crime.

It seems to the Committee that some way should be devised to prevent this ; and as in other cities, legislation has been resorted to, they recommend that application be made by your honorable body to the General Assembly, for the passage of an act for the prevention of truancy.

The employment of children in our manufacturing establishments during the night time, has in the opinion of the Committee a most debasing influence on the character of that portion of our community dependant upon that labor for their support. It is a practice that should, if possible, be prohibited. Boys and girls alike are employed throughout the entire night during some portion of the year, thus reversin

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mittees were appointed, and most of the schools have been visited during the term by one or more of each Committee.

By the reports of the Superintendent at each quarterly meeting, the Committee are better able to judge of the standard of each school, and of the proficiency it has made, than heretofore; as the several schools are subjected to a rigid examination by the Superintendent, in the different studies pursued by them. The per-centage of correct answers being carefully noticed, the rank of a school is soon determined; and by a comparison of these results from term to term, the progress is ascertained. Under the old method of visiting by the Committee during the term and on examination day, though the general appearance of the scholars, their promptness in recitation, and the discipline of the school, could be noted; yet no comparison between schools could be instituted so that a correct judgment of their excellence could be formed.

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This apparent decrease in the number of children attending our Public Schools, notwithstanding the large increase in our population, may be accounted for by the fact that several hundred children have been withdrawn to attend upon the Roman Catholic Schools.

In view of these facts, your Committee recommend that your honorable body require the persons engaged in taking the census of the city at the present time, to ascertain the number of children between the ages of five and sixteen years, who attend the Public Schools; the num-

## APPENDIX.

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The following table will show at a glance, first, the number of scholars admitted; second, the average number belonging to the school; third, the average attendance; fourth, the average absence; and fifth, the per cent. of absence.

	Number admitted.	Average belonging.	Average attendance.	Average absence.	Percent absence.
Summer term, 1854,	5,973	5,077.3	4,128.3	949	18.06
Fall term, 1854,	6,264	5,514.9	4,848.1	666.8	12.07
Winter term, 1854-5,	6,172	5,505.4	4,578.8	926.6	16.83
Spring term, 1855,	6,620	5,650.	4,952.8	697.2	12.32
Total average,	6,257	5,436.9	4,627.	809.9	14.89

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Another grade of schools to meet the wants of people who cannot attend regularly, has engaged the attention of the Committee. Upon a full discussion of the matter, they have failed to make application to your honorable body, for such an establishment, in accordance in relation to Public Schools, as will meet this want.

The subject of truancy has long been considered by the Superintendent and the Committee, as an evil, requiring interposition in this community. Boys, by the neglect of their parents, or from other causes, are allowed to remain in the streets, preparing the way for a life of vice and crime.

It seems to the Committee that some very serious is desired to prevent this; and as in other cities, legislation has been resorted to, they recommend that application be made by your honorable body to the General Assembly, for the passage of an act for the prevention of truancy.

The employment of children in the manufacturing establishments during the night time, has in the opinion of the Committee a most debasing influence on the character of the youth of our community dependent upon that labor for their support. It is a practice that should, if possible, be prohibited. Boys and girls who are employed, should not be out the entire night during some portion of the year, thus depriving



order of nature, and turning night into day; and at that age, the bad effect upon the morals, upon the future character of these persons, cannot be estimated. The day is spent partly in sleep, and partly in the street; and they are left to grow up in the lowest depths of ignorance, and consequently fit subjects for crime and vice.

Three new schools have been opened since the last Report. One, a Primary School, in the engine house on Wickenden street, an Intermediate School in the engine house on Knight street, and a Primary School, temporarily in the engine house on Haymarket street.

Other schools will be needed within the coming year to relieve those reported at present as too full for comfort, convenience or health. The school opened near the Woonasquatucket Print Works, to take the place of the one in the building on Potter's Avenue, destroyed by fire, will have to be closed during the heat of summer, unless other and better accommodations can be procured. The average attendance at this school the term just passed, being more than sixty; a regard for the health of teachers and pupils will require it to be discontinued.

The Committee regret that the request for a new school-house near this locality, made to your honorable body nearly a year since, could not have been more promptly complied with: that the difficulty in grading the lot should have caused so long a delay in commencing the building. The Committee trust that it will now be pushed vigorously forward, so that it may be ready to be occupied before the next Winter term.

In this connection the Committee take the liberty of suggesting to your honorable body, the propriety of allowing them hereafter to build under the advice and direction of their own committees, all school-buildings; as from their familiarity with the matter, with the wants of a district where a school is to be located, they are better qualified to judge of plans for building, &c., than gentlemen, who, by the press of their own business, and the affairs of the City government, are prevented from giving that attention to the subject which its importance demands.

During the present season, the Grammar School buildings in the first, third, fifth and sixth districts, and the High School will have to be supplied with new apparatus for warming. The present mode being wholly inadequate for even moderate winter weather, requiring, in the extreme cold days, a dismissal of the schools.

New furnaces have been erected in the second and fourth districts, of sufficient dimensions to thoroughly warm every room in the coldest weather.

A more perfect system of ventilation will also have to be introduced, than is at present possessed by most of our school-houses. The plan of ventilating by opening the windows over the heads of the children, may answer the purpose by changing the atmosphere, but it cannot be

considered a good, or even a tolerable method. Especially when we consider the different systems already introduced in other cities, and in the public buildings of this city for accomplishing the same object in a pleasanter, and when health is taken into view, a safer way.

The attention of the Committee will be early given to this matter.

At the close of the Winter term, Samuel S. Greene, Esq., our able and efficient Superintendent for the past four years, closed his connection with our school system, by the resignation of his office.

The following resolutions unanimously adopted at the meeting of the Committee on the 15th of February last, express the high estimation in which his services were held by the Committee, and their reluctance at parting with him.

*“WHEREAS, Samuel S. Greene, Esq., having been appointed to a Professorship in Brown University, has resigned the office of Superintendent of Public Schools in this City, therefore*

*Resolved, That we accept with sincere regret, the resignation tendered by Mr. Greene, of the office which he has held for nearly four years past, with signal advantage to our Public Schools, and to the general interests of education in this city.*

*Resolved, That in thus dissolving the connection which Mr. Greene has so long sustained to this Committee, we record our high appreciation of the ability, fidelity and success with which he has discharged the duties of his office; and that we hereby express to him our best wishes for his happiness and usefulness, in the new sphere of professional labors which he is about to enter.”*

The vacancy occasioned by the resignation of Mr. Greene, was filled by the election of Rev. Daniel Leach, of Roxbury, a man every way qualified for the station by long experience, education, and those qualities requisite in such an office; and the Committee congratulate themselves and the Council, that they were enabled to secure the services of so valuable an officer.

The present number of schools is forty-nine, divided as follows: one High School, six Grammar Schools, seventeen Intermediate Schools, and twenty-two Primary Schools, and three Schools for colored children.

In the various schools, one hundred and thirteen teachers are employed; eleven male, and one hundred and two female teachers.

A fourth room for girls will be opened in the High School the ensuing term. A teacher for this position has been taken from the assistants in our Grammar Schools. The Committee have been unable to procure a suitable person to fill the long-existing vacancy of Principal of the High School. This is not caused by want of exertions on the part of the Committee, nor by a lack of men proper for the position; but that the salary proposed, though deemed extremely liberal by the Council, is much less a sum than the talent required will command in cities smaller than ours; and the fact cannot longer be concealed, that though our

Public Schools cost a large sum of money, yet the salaries paid our teachers, which constitute by far the larger portion of the amount, are less than those paid for the same services all around us.

During the past winter, two Evening Schools were maintained, one on Richmond street in the ward room, and one on Haymarket street, in the engine house. We extract from the Quarterly Report of the Superintendent to the Committee, February 23d, last, the following in regard to these schools :

"The Evening Schools established on the eighteenth of December have continued without interruption till the present. They have been uniformly full, and have exceeded the expectations of the most sanguine.

"Perhaps one cause of the constant attendance which has characterized the Evening Schools of this season, has been the fact that sufficient accommodations were not furnished for all who applied for admission.

"The names of all applicants were recorded in the order of their application and every vacant seat has been immediately filled from a reserved list. This has secured a constancy of attendance never before known in our Evening Schools. Of those first admitted, very few have left; so that the attendance may be regarded as good as that in any of our schools. From several personal visits, from the opinions of the Committee who have had the Schools especially in charge, and from frequent conversation with the teachers, I am persuaded that the Evening Schools of this year must be regarded as eminently successful."

During the term just closed, lessons in penmanship have been given to the teachers by Mr. Scribner, of Boston, under the direction of this Committee. The good effects of these are already apparent in the improvement in the writing of the pupils in our several schools.

The Committee indulge the hope that the expense of this course of lessons to the teachers, may be returned in the improvement of the scholars under them.

The establishment of the State Normal School has, to a certain extent, relieved the High School from the pressure upon it, by taking from it those scholars who intended to fit themselves for the responsible and noble duty of teaching.

In our last Report, the wants of the Western portion of our City were fully commented upon, in relation to an additional Grammar School, or another High School.

The subject was so fully and ably discussed then, that we only refer to it at this time, to say no further action has been taken on the matter by the Committee since that time.

In concluding this Report, the Committee are happy to state that the school buildings generally are in excellent order. Some repairs will be required the present season upon the Grammar School buildings.

In contrasting the schools and corps of teachers with the same at the time of our last Report, the Committee are satisfied that while nothing

has been lost, much has been gained, and our citizens may rest assured, that the money here expended will be returned to them with usury.

Respectfully submitted,

For the School Committee,

THOMAS A. DOYLE, }  
HENRY WATERMAN, }  
SAMUEL WOLCOTT. }

PROVIDENCE, June 4, 1855.

**REPORT**  
**OF THE**  
**Superintendent of Public Schools**  
**OF THE**  
**CITY OF PROVIDENCE.**

**TO THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE OF PROVIDENCE.**

**GENTLEMEN :**

IN accordance with one of your established regulations, I hereby respectfully submit my first Quarterly Report. As the time elapsed since I entered upon the duties of my office is so short, it will not be possible for me to enter so fully into a description of the present condition, and the future wants of our schools as a more extended observation will enable me to do. It has been my first aim to ascertain the nature and extent of the duties of the office of Superintendent, and it is my fixed purpose not to assume anything that properly belongs to others, nor to leave undone anything that is legitimately required of myself.

All the schools in this city have been visited and examined a number of times during the quarter, especially the Primary and intermediate Schools, in which I have spent from three to five hours of almost every day, either in teaching, or in suggesting such modes of instruction as seemed best adapted to their wants and condition. And it is with much satisfaction that I am able to speak in terms of high commendation of nearly all the schools in the city. In respect to their general appearance, neatness and good order, they surpass any schools I have ever seen. In these particulars they may justly be regarded the model schools of New England. Such results never could have been produced without thorough teaching and discipline, together with the most faithful and intelligent supervision.

But as we are never to rest satisfied with present attainment, but to press forward to still higher degrees of excellence, I shall proceed to call attention to some of the evils attendant upon our present school system, and suggest a few appropriate remedies.

The evil that first presents itself to my mind, is one of no ordinary magnitude, and I allude to it at this time, not because it exists in this city in a greater degree than elsewhere, but rather because its enormity is so great that it never should be lost sight of, until some judicious and appropriate remedy is found for its mitigation or permanent cure. I refer to the irregular attendance of children in our Public Schools. It is hardly possible to overstate the magnitude of this evil. It is one that has engaged the attention and awakened the anxious solicitude of the friends of education throughout New England. In our educational periodicals, and in the reports of Committees and Superintendents, eloquent and touching appeals have been sent forth to parents, and still this evil is shedding its saddening and blighting influences over the best schools in our land. The means and agencies that are now employed in the noblest of all causes, are failing to produce their legitimate results. Thorough and skillful teaching, united with vigilant and careful supervision, can accomplish, comparatively, but little, when the attendance of pupils is inconstant and irregular. What can more effectually damp the ardor of a faithful teacher, and render nugatory his best directed efforts, than the frequent absences of his pupils? For in a school properly graded and classed, every instance of absence or tardiness produces, more or less, disorder and confusion, and seriously interrupts the onward progress of the class. When a pupil returns to school after a long or a short absence, the class to which he belongs must either wait in idleness, while he is fully prepared in that which they have passed over, or he must be subjected to the mortification of attempting to comprehend truths which cannot be thoroughly understood without a knowledge of that which precedes. For there can be no intelligent study unless each preceding step is preparatory to a succeeding one.

It is true now, as it was in the days of Bacon, that everything unknown must be learned by a comparison with something else that is well known. And without this previous preparation all the pleasure arising from the clear conception of interesting truths is lost, and the pupil is often compelled to plod on his weary way in listlessness and disgust. This injudicious mode of teaching by compelling pupils to grapple with subjects far beyond their comprehension, not only creates in their minds a distaste for study and mental effort, but necessarily produces that vicious habit of incoherent and confused thought, which is utterly incompatible with sound scholarship. The developing of the powers of the mind in their natural order, is of far more consequence

than the simple knowledge of any number of facts, however important they may be. And this can be secured only by a gradual and uninterrupted process, analogous to that which we observe in nature, in the opening bud and the expanding flower.

The effect of irregular attendance on the discipline of the school is no less marked and striking. When scholars cease to be interested in their studies, they soon become proper subjects for discipline. A large majority of all cases of difficulty, originate from this source. Instances are quite rare of pupils falling under censure, who are prompt and regular in their attendance at school.

But this evil is by no means limited to the school-room. The habits formed in early life have a powerful and abiding influence in determining the future career of every youth. And every system of education must be radically defective in which this is not regarded of paramount importance.

The origin of this evil is to be found in the fact that many parents do not feel their responsibility in this matter. Were they fully aware of the irreparable injury they are doing to their children, they could not keep them from school for trifling causes.

For there can be no high appreciation of knowledge when children can absent themselves from school on any plea of pleasure or temporary convenience. What is not valued will not be sought for with vigorous effort. Intelligent action ever will be commensurate with its moving cause, both in the energy by which it is put forth, and in the wisdom by which it is directed. Were there a standard by which the *pecuniary* value of education could be ascertained as accurately as any article of merchandise, and could the loss to each pupil of every day's absence from school be determined, as it were, by weight and measure, we then might hope to reach the minds of some parents, who are now indifferent to this subject. Could they be convinced that the labor of their children, when they leave school, would be worth, pecuniarily, from twenty-five to fifty per cent. more, if their minds were well disciplined and cultivated, than if they receive only an imperfect and defective education, we should see less of that cruel economy that is now practised by parents, in starving the intellect and impoverishing the hearts of their children, in order to lay up wealth to be squandered by them in their ignorance.

But there are infinitely higher motives by which parents should be governed; motives drawn from the very nature of the human mind itself. When we consider that it has powers of unlimited growth and expansion to be developed, and that knowledge is the only element that can give strength and vigor, ought not this to be supplied as freely and as bountifully as the air we breathe, and the light that dawns on our path?

But much may be done towards mitigating this evil by the teachers. Their position is one of great power; its full force has never yet been seen or felt. Every teacher throws around him an influence of which he is utterly unconscious, and this is silently moulding and forming all that is precious and permanent in character. The approving smile and the withering frown leave an impress upon the tender heart of a child which no period of time can efface or remove. The first aim of every teacher should be to convince his pupils that he seeks only their highest good, and that all his efforts will be directed to this end; and that, although he is clothed with authority to restrain the wayward, and excite the indolent, he is also adorned with Christian graces to win those of a gentler mould to the laborious pleasure of thought and study. Much can be done by every teacher to render the school-room attractive to scholars, that they may feel that it is not only for their interest, but their highest pleasure to be present at school. When this power over the youthful mind is possessed by a teacher, he can accomplish in his school, almost anything he wishes.

But parents and teachers must act unitedly in this great work; until this is done nothing permanent and valuable will be secured, and our quarterly returns will continue to disclose the lamentable fact, that out of six thousand children whose names are registered in the Public Schools of this city, there is a daily average absence of nearly one thousand. Is not this significant fact of itself sufficient to awaken a deeper and more general interest in this subject?

But there is a large class of children who do not and who cannot attend regularly any school. They are obliged, when they can find employment, to assist their parents at home, in procuring the necessaries of life. Yet there are weeks and sometimes months during the year, in which they would gladly avail themselves of common school instruction, were there any schools adapted to their wants and condition. Many of these are not qualified for the Grammar Schools, and even if they were, they could not be properly classed in them, on account of frequent necessary absences. Is it fitting to send children from thirteen to seventeen years of age to the Primary or Intermediate Schools, the only schools into which their qualifications will admit them, to be classed with boys and girls from five to eight years of age? If they attend school at all, these are the only schools they can enter. I have no doubt that if inquiries were now made, it would be ascertained that there is a large number of children who do not attend school for this reason. In our excellent school system there seems to be no provision made that is exactly suited to this unfortunate, but deserving class of youth. They need a peculiar kind of instruction, such as is not now furnished in any of our Public Schools, which will best fit them for the practical duties



of life in the shortest time. They should also be subjected to a different kind of discipline, adapted to their unfortunate condition. It would be manifestly unjust to bind them to the same rules and regulations that are required for other pupils.

To meet the wants of this large and increasing class of youth, I would recommend the establishment of one or more schools for their special benefit and accommodation.

These schools should embrace in their course of instruction all the studies of our Primary, Intermediate and Grammar Schools. They may be styled Mixed or Ungraded Schools. The highest order of talent, both for discipline and instruction, should be secured, to give them efficiency and success. And they should ever receive the special fostering care of this Committee. There is no class of children in the community that has so strong a claim upon our sympathy and liberality, and this claim is urged by every sentiment of humanity, as well as by every dictate of an enlightened policy; for unless they are brought under the genial and refining influence of intellectual and moral culture, they will be trained to the practice of the most odious vices and daring crimes. There is no truth better established than that ignorance is the fruitful source of every species of human misery, and were there no higher motive than that suggested by a rigid economy, this class of youth should not be overlooked; for labor increases in value just in proportion to the degree of intelligence by which it is directed. There is no sphere in life in which this sound maxim of political economy does not hold good. Hence it is that the permanent and available wealth of every community consists, not so much in the material products of exchange, as in the imperishable treasures of a refined and cultivated intellect. To bring out this wealth, a germ of which exists in every youthful mind, to purify it of its earthly dross and fit it for its highest uses, is and ever should be, the end and aim of all Common School education.

There is still another class of youth who are habitual truants, whom no parental authority can reach, and no power but that of the law can bring under the influence of intellectual and moral discipline. Shall such continue to roam our streets, and early become initiated into all the debasing vices of our city, or shall the friendly arm of the law be extended to rescue them from utter degradation and ruin? Without the aid of some legislative enactment but little can be done by this Committee to benefit this class. Active sympathy and moral suasion can accomplish something, but there can be no effectual remedy for this growing evil, unless there are compulsory measures to be resorted to when necessary. In many towns and cities in New England a truant law is enforced, which is accomplishing an incalculable amount of good. Might not a judicious law, wisely administered, produce similar results

in this city ? This subject is well deserving the serious consideration of this Committee.

During the last fortnight, the first class in each of the schools of this city have been examined by the Superintendent, and the result of the examination has been highly satisfactory. There was exhibited indubitable evidence of a steady, onward progress. All of the Grammar Schools were examined in music by Professor Greene, who reports that there has been a very marked and decided improvement in this important branch of Common School instruction.

Some important changes have been made in the High School, which I think, will secure greater efficiency and thoroughness. A fourth room for girls has been opened, by which forty additional pupils can be accommodated. A teacher has been employed to give instruction in French in both departments.

A Primary School has been opened in Haymarket street, with two teachers, to meet the pressing wants in that neighborhood, and is now quite full. The school in Wickenden street has been reduced to so small a number by the removal of Catholic children, that unless it should be materially increased, I would recommend its discontinuance at the close of the next term.

In conclusion, I would earnestly recommend to the consideration of the Committee, the propriety of making an appropriation for the purchase of maps, books of reference, and apparatus for the High School.

The tables accompanying this report will show the average attendance of pupils belonging to each district of the different grades, and the average per cent. of absence for each, for the quarter.

All of which is respectfully submitted,

DANIEL LEACH,

*Superintendent of Public Schools.*

ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
OF THE  
Town of North Providence.

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In accordance with the statute, the School Committee of North Providence respectfully submit the following Report:—

The Town Council, at its meeting in June last, elected the following persons for School Committee, to wit: John C. Tower, Joseph Wescott, A. R. Abbott, Stanton Belden, Obadiah Brown and John H. Willard.

The Board was subsequently organized by electing John C. Tower, Chairman, and John H. Willard, Clerk.

The Committee have held thirteen meetings during the year, and their duties otherwise have been unusually arduous—the correspondence alone requiring the transmission of more than one hundred letters, notices, &c.

FINANCES.

The following funds have been placed at our disposal :

From the State,	\$2250 60
“ “ Town Tax,	3500 00
“ “ Registry Tax, (for 1853-4)	300 00
Total,	<hr/> \$6050 60

This has been nearly absorbed by orders in favor of the different districts, and, in all cases, for expenses previously incurred.

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Were all the schools in the town permanent, the above total would fall considerably short of meeting their annual expenses. But, as many of them are public but part of the year, a surplus has, for several years, been accumulating in favor of such districts as did not need, or did not choose to use their entire dividends, and the Committee, by the law of 1846, had no power, in any way, to transfer such excesses to the deficient districts. The revised school law, however, empowers the Board to re-divide all balances, that may thus appear, among the various districts under their charge, whenever they deem such a measure necessary. A part of the above balances the Committee have thought advisable to thus re-divide, and have also passed a vote that each district, on being notified by the clerk, shall present its bill, on the last day of May, covering all expenses to date, and that all excesses which may still remain to the credit of the school department, after such bills have been ordered, shall be added to the general school fund for the next year, to be divided as usual. Justice to many of the districts that now eke out their schools by a tuition bill or a tax on the district property, absolutely demands the permanency of this regulation.

No additional appropriation has been asked of the town since 1850. Since that time the average attendance has greatly increased—the number of schools, by means of grading, has nearly doubled, and the teachers, as principals and assistants, have considerably *more* than doubled. Under these circumstances the Committee feel bound, respectfully, to recommend that the sum of \$1000 be added to the present appropriation. The increase of taxable property in the town since the above date, will fully warrant this measure—which has now become indispensable to the prosperity of the enterprise. The Committee who, by law, serve without compensation, and are also taxed with the rest of their fellow citizens, would, by no means, encourage any expenditure not absolutely unavoidable. But this appeal has already been forborne too long, and we hope and trust that no consideration will be suffered to delay it longer.

#### SCHOOL HOUSES.

It gives the Committee pleasure to state that the chronic difficulties of District No. 3, are in a fair way of amicable adjustment. The house near Corliss & Nightingale's is being raised and a story subjoined, and a new house is to be immediately erected on the west side of the railroad for different grades of schools. The completion of these arrangements will raise this district to the rank to which its wealth and population have long since entitled it.

The house on Smith's Hill is nearly new and in good condition, but will soon fail for want of capacity—although quite recently enlarged.

When this has been provided for, and the purposes of No. 3 consummated, the town will then be supplied throughout with commodious, and, in many cases, elegant and expensive school houses—and for the prospective disposal of matters so pregnant with contention and strife as the erection of school houses, we have reason cordially to congratulate both the town and our successors in office. Seldom is a school house erected where the recriminations do not equal its shingles plus its clapboards plus the nails that hold both on—or that is not dedicated in advance by profane invocations. Whoever wishes to test the moral tone of a district should propose to build a school house. All but the saints will swear to begin with—*they'll* wait till the School Committee approves the tax.

#### TRUSTEES AND THEIR DUTIES.

We have found the Trustees of the town, with whom our duties have kept us in constant intercourse, to be gentlemen of intelligence, and many of them deeply interested in the responsibilities entrusted to their care. The success of our schools depends more perhaps upon the competency and faithfulness of these functionaries than any others in authority. Indeed, no school will ever utterly fail, unless something is wrong here. The law makes it their duty to visit the schools under their care at the commencement and close of each term. But the faithful trustee will never restrict his visits to the bare requirements of law. In order to awaken and sustain an interest in all parties, he should allow no week of school to pass without his presence. Neither are the duties connected with this station matters of mere muscular effort. The trustee should not only be able to buy brooms and supply coal, but, if possible, to drill the classes in their daily exercises. Where such men are not to be had, those that approach nearest to them should be taken. The best men in a district are never *too good* for its trustees—the second best never *good enough*.

#### DUTIES OF PARENTS.

We cannot too earnestly urge upon parents the duty of visiting their respective schools more frequently. The entrance of visitors to a school—where visiting is infrequent—is like the presence of an acid to an alkali—it produces fermentation of which the pupil's ideas become the escaping gas. Many a teacher—like the humble writer—has drenched his pillow over the mortifications of such an event. And what can a superintendent effect in such a school? He could as well examine a flock of wild pigeons after the discharge of a rifle in their midst. His entrance has much the effect of a sheriff's to a cell of condemned criminals—all of whom are expecting to hear their death warrant. Besides, there can be no good reason why the parent's interest should not extend

to his child's education. His food and raiment are seldom resigned to the care of others, why then should his education be? Why should the parent with studious care, superintend the *body* of his child, which must blanch in death and decay in the grave, to the neglect of the *invulnerable mind* whose destiny is eternal? But again, nothing encourages a scholar like the presence of his parent. He may perhaps be unlearned, but this matters not to the child, while to himself it is all the more important, for every *such* person should earnestly seek to place his children above his own level in this regard. Parents who visit their schools, cultivate an intimacy with the teacher, and learn, to some extent, the trials of his vocation, are the last to condemn any measure for the common good, because it conflicts with their imaginary interests. Such persons never originate or give countenance to slanderous reports against a well conducted school. Such reports issue from those who shun schools as they do vipers, and whose supplications are always for *meum*—never for *tuum*. The least ceremony there is connected with such visitations, the better. Let chairs be provided, and a scholar appointed as door-keeper to admit and seat callers without the teacher's aid. In this way no one will be hindered; and when the convenient time expires—the embroidery is wrought—or the stocking finished, let the withdrawal be alike quiet and simple. Thus the school room can be made a place of daily resort, to the great benefit of all parties, and the prejudice of none.

## IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE.

Another prevailing evil is irregularity of attendance. We are happy to say, however, that this evil is on the wane, and is rapidly disappearing in two of our schools which have made it a matter of stringent regulation. The average attendance in one of these schools, was during the fall term, 96 1-10 per cent. of the total attendance. This might, and should, be the case in every school of the town. Children of like years that are employed for wages average 98 per cent., and the only difference in the two cases is in the nature of the reward—one being money and the other mind. We hope such regulations may be adopted throughout the town as will immediately suppress this evil. Persons will doubtless be found every where who think, because "they pay for schools," they are therefore entitled to send when and how they please. Irregular attendance would be but a matter of self-injustice, did such persons pay the *whole* expense. But paying *one-thousandth part* can give no one the right to injure every body else. They pay their highwa tax; why then do they take "the right according to law?" Why not amuse themselves by riding obliquely across the carriage way, or

fencing up a portion for private use. Why do such persons pay their notes at the bank precisely at three o'clock to prevent protesting?—when the loan is as much a benefit to the bank as themselves. Perhaps they own railroad stock; why do they run themselves out of breath and into the asthma to reach the cars at the time appointed? Why not oblige the public to wait until they and their families are well on board? They pay their town taxes; why not board their children at the poor house, or draw upon the supplies there to subserve present necessities? The schools of the State are regulated by law as well as the above institutions, and the rights of individuals restricted with regard to the former the same as to the latter. The utmost therefore we can ask of such persons is to be consistent, and as often as the bell rings and the car of education starts, see that their children are punctually on board.

Suppose a teacher should form a dozen scholars into a class in Arithmetic. One is absent until some important principle is mastered by the class, and without which he cannot advance a step. He must, thereafter, of course be taught alone—requiring however, the same time as does the whole class. Soon another absents himself in like manner, and the same consequences ensue, and thus instead of *one* class of *twelve scholars* he has *twelve* classes of *one scholar*, which will obviously require his whole attention, to the entire neglect of the residue of the school, whose whole attendance has perhaps been perfect.

The only alternative is to delay the class, for a few days, on the return of every absentee, until he can be brought up to their attainments. This would be equally unjust and inimical to the common interests of the school. And yet a few persons—generally not more than three or four—are forcing these results upon most of the several districts in the town, to the infinite injury of their own offspring as well as those of the community. Such gross injustice should by no means be longer tolerated.

Parents who complain that their children are not sufficiently encouraged, should remember that, by a single day's absence, scholars, otherwise abundantly able to progress with their classes, are frequently thrown behind, disheartened, their ambition sunk to zero, and all grounds of encouragement entirely rent away. The standard of salutary commendation can never be lowered to reach such scholars, and the only remedy for the evil complained of lies *entirely* and *exclusively* with the parent himself.

#### MORAL INSTRUCTION.

We fear that moral instruction, as a part of common school education, is quite too much neglected. A suitable manual for this purpose is, as yet, a desideratum. But the teacher himself should be able to supply this deficiency. There is scarcely a branch he teaches but may

properly form a basis for such instruction. Geography, Astronomy, Physiology, Botany, Zoology, &c., cannot, in fact, be fully elaborated without awakening sentiments of both morality and religion. Many portions of the Bible are peculiarly fitted for this sort of teaching—among which the history of Joseph stands preeminent.

If this state of existence is but the vestibule of another whose felicities depend essentially upon our improvement of this, then such improvement should form the grand centre to which all earthly attainments should incessantly converge. The sole function of the teacher is the moulding of mind. He should therefore mingle with it such views of the Deity's power, wisdom and goodness—such a sense of its own dependence, immortality and marvellous attributes, and such an appreciation of the social virtues as will best fit it for its high and exalted destiny.

#### TEACHERS SHOULD BE RETAINED.

Our schools will never produce their highest benefits until they can all be made permanent, and retain their teachers from year to year. One of the hindrances to their complete success is the yearly change of teachers—*now* made necessary by the inability of several districts to continue their schools throughout the year. The usefulness of a teacher increases with his continuance in the same school. His second year's services are one-third more valuable to the same district than his first, and will continue to augment in nearly the same ratio. His discipline and general system of teaching become established, and—what is more—his interests and ambition become identified with those of the community in which he resides.

#### CONCLUSION.

It gives us pleasure to state, in conclusion, that the schools of the town compare favorably, as we believe, with the schools of New England.—generally—that the present year has been propitious to their merits, and that their prospects for the future are every way encouraging. The data from which we derive these opinions are partly the results of our own observations, and partly the various verbal and written reports of J. H. Willard, who, at our first meeting in June last, was elected to superintend said schools. To his annual report—which we here append—we invite particular attention.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

JOHN C. TOWER, Chairman.

JOHN H. WILLARD, Clerk.



NORTH PROVIDENCE, May 19, 1855.

*School Committee of North Providence:*

GENTLEMEN:—During the school year—now closing—the various public schools of the town have been visited as the law directs. In discharging these duties, Messrs. Sisson, Abbott, Savage and Robbins have, from time to time, rendered me very efficient and acceptable aid. The facts, thus developed, I embody below, together with such hints and recommendations as seem indispensable to a correct knowledge of the present condition and future wants of said schools.

DISTRICT No. 1. PAWTUCKET.

*The Primary Department* here has for some time been under the care of its present Principal, with some variety, however, in her Assistants. They teach well, and fully compensate by a superabundance of maternity and kindness for any apparent laxness in discipline.

*The 2d Intermediate Department* was taught in the summer and fall by a young lady of amiability, good qualifications, and great aptness to teach. Her school did her credit. Shortly after her resignation I visited the school under her successor. It promised well, and proves to be one of our best schools.

*The 1st Intermediate*—which has hitherto been made the highest department in the summer season, and was, this year, merged in the grammar department during the winter term, (the respective teachers becoming associate principals)—was taught by a young lady who possesses, in an eminent degree, the essential attributes of a good teacher, and who applies them with such tact and energy as to make them tell to their best effect.

*The Grammar Department* was, during the fall and winter terms, under the care of a gentleman of fine literary attainments, great self-reliance, and more than ordinary ability both to discipline and teach. The trustees are wisely retaining his services—an example I particularly recommend to their successors in office. The Assistant in this department, for the summer and fall terms, is an excellent young lady, with kind disposition and good social qualities, and who rendered the district very acceptable service.

DISTRICT No. 2. PAWTUCKET.

The principal teachers in this district have retained their respective positions for several consecutive years. *The lower school* is in all respects, one of rare merit. *The Middle Department* involves again much of the maternal principle, but exhibits good results; and the *Grammar*

*Department*—under my own care—with an able and energetic Assistant—exhibits varying success according to the materials to be wrought upon. A year since—to relieve the schools below, then crowded to excess—some seventy scholars were transferred to our department. To meet this emergency, some of the advanced pupils were regularly installed by the trustees as Assistants, who have done themselves credit and the school good service. The average attendance here, for the fall term, was 96 1-10 per cent. of the full attendance, and probably would have been as high for the winter term, had it not been for an unusual amount of sickness. This large attendance has resulted from regulations adopted by the trustees several years since.

#### DISTRICT No. 3. WENSCOTT.

This district has two departments in separate buildings. At the *Primary House*, with 90 seats, the attendance has been about 200 scholars. The Principal of this department is an able and experienced teacher, and, with an efficient Assistant, has accomplished all that the circumstances would permit. This house is now undergoing a process of enlargement which will more than double its present capacity.

*The Grammar Department*, with 40 seats, has, the past winter, registered near 120 pupils. The summer term of this department was taught by a young gentleman who possesses tact, talent and attainment, and will succeed well wherever he teaches. The fall and winter terms were under the care of a gentleman highly qualified, and of great industry and perseverance, and who—despite the untoward circumstances that fairly whelmed him—produced valuable results. This district is one of the most wealthy and populous in the town, and when its present arrangements are completed, will assume its proper standing among its fellow districts.

Some years since a public spirited gentleman built a school house in the western part of this district, the use of which he tendered to the trustees. The school has been supported partly by generous donations from the owner of the house and other individuals of the neighborhood, and partly by the town. The school here is small, but under the care of a good teacher, and apparently making fine progress.

#### DISTRICT No. 4. WOODVILLE.

This school is not yet graded. The young lady that taught it through the year has many qualities of a good teacher. She disciplines with ease and teaches to fair advantage. The house affords good accommodations and the scholarship is of ordinary promise.

## DISTRICT No. 5. CENTERDALE.

This school consists of two grades.

*The Lower Department* has been under its present teacher some five or six years. She is finely adapted to her position, and the district has reaped a rich reward by the retention of her services.

*The Grammar Department* was taught by a gentleman whose many excellent qualities entitle him to high regard. The department has, however, for a year or two past, been declining both in numbers and ambition, and will require a teacher of peculiar energy to place it upon its former level. The house is a model of school architecture, and the interest manifested by the citizens at their examinations is worthy of much praise.

## DISTRICT No. 6. MANTON.

The school in this district has also two departments. *The lower school* here has again been, for two years, under the care of the same teacher, and being well taught and disciplined, has made excellent progress.

The male teacher here taught, during the summer term, in District No. 3, and the teacher *now* in No. 3 taught the summer term, *here*. Having therefore under the head of No. 3, expressed my opinion both of these teachers and their respective schools, I will only add that the present incumbent in this district—relieved from the disabilities of the former, and placed in a new and convenient house, and with only a suitable number of pupils, has, greatly to his own credit, turned these advantages to most excellent account.

## DISTRICT No. 7. FRUIT HILL.

This school again is ungraded, and the two young ladies who taught it in succession are well qualified and well fitted both to govern and teach. Under their management the school has made very satisfactory progress. The house is in good condition and pleasantly located, but the access to it should be somewhat improved.

## DISTRICT No. 8. NEAR OLNEYVILLE.

In this district the school is divided into three departments. *The lower one* was, in the summer, taught by an able, experienced and successful teacher, who, when she resigned, had been its Principal for nearly seven years. It will therefore be enough to say of her successor that, with a good Assistant, she has fully preserved the reputation of the school. Indeed, many of the ornamental exercises of this department were among the most pleasing I have ever witnessed.

*The Intermediate School* has, from its origin, been taught by the present incumbent. She seems to possess every requisite of a finished teacher, and what she fails to effect cannot well, I venture to say, be effected by any one. My calls at her room are always a pastime—never a task.

The present teacher of the *Grammar Department* has retained his post for many years. On him and his school myself and colleagues in office have, in former reports, drawn hard upon the list of laudatory epithets. I shall only add here, that he is fully master of his calling, and his school one of extraordinary merit. I seldom visit here without self-improvement, and earnestly recommend the experiment to others of our profession.

#### DISTRICT No. 9. EAST TURNPIKE.

This school is rather the smallest in the town, although its territory is nearly equal to the largest. The summer term was taught by a young lady of limited qualifications, though of very fair practical success. The winter term was under the care of a young gentleman of a good degree of talent and fair literary attainments, and who made most commendable efforts to succeed. He was followed by a teacher who, in a very short time, accomplished a great amount of good for the district. I regret that his engagements permitted him to remain no longer.

#### DISTRICT No. 10. SMITH'S HILL.

This school has two grades. The Principals are the same as last year. The summer term of the *Lower Department* was taught by the Principal alone. The duties proved too arduous for any single teacher, and, during the fall and winter terms, she has been well assisted, which has resulted in bringing the department into a most excellent condition.

*The Grammar School* has, for the last three or four years, been under its present teacher. He is a substantial man with good qualifications for his calling, and has succeeded well in gaining the confidence of the district. His order is always excellent, and his school constantly improving. This district very much needs a house for three grades of schools.

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#### GENERAL REMARKS.

Convinced that the defects in teaching throughout the town, have, the present year, been of the head and not the heart, I have reserved them for this chapter, to avoid making them too personal; couching the report however in such terms as to prevent misapplication. Errors there have been, notwithstanding, both numerous and important, and in one

or two instances the Teachers have proved totally inadequate to their respective stations. Embracing these defects under the head of *general* remarks, I leave each Teacher to select and profit by those portions which apply particularly to himself.

1st. *QUALIFICATIONS.* Not one Teacher in ten of those we are obliged—for want of better—to approve, is *properly* qualified for his vocation. It is only by closing one eye and one ear, and being cautious even then what questions we put, that a majority of the Teachers are got through at all. The system of County Inspectors is, as at present conducted, also prejudicial to the school interests of the State. These officials serve without compensation; and, being unrestricted, grant many of their certificates without examination, which, being countersigned by the State Commissioner, become valid throughout the State for three years. Certificates from these sources were originally designed to indicate a superior qualification, and to confer special advantages upon those who should obtain them. Such applicants should, therefore, be made to pay for their examination, and the Inspector to forfeit his commission for any malpractice. The State has now made an appropriation for normal instruction, and the town should, as soon as may be, select its teachers from among its graduates. This will, in a good degree, at least, obviate this difficulty.

2d. *DISCIPLINE.* The order of the schools—except such as have failed in all respects—has been good, I might perhaps say—excellent, and the Teachers have generally been well sustained, both by Trustees and parents in this particular. Physical penalties are gradually giving place to those of a milder and less alienating character, and Teachers being viewed less as the common enemy of the community. Cases do occur, however, and probably always will, where the Teacher is compelled either to relinquish his authority, or maintain it by physical force. Such cases, however, are becoming less and less frequent as parents feel the importance of co-operating with the Teacher instead of the scholar; for a child—once subdued—will seldom again rebel unless instigated by the spirit of the home fireside.

A couple of large pupils were allowed, by their parents, to leave one of the best schools in the town for a very slight cause, after the Teacher had offered capitulation upon their own honor, which they refused. This is the only instance of the kind that has come to my knowledge, the present year, and this—meeting with but little sympathy beyond the families concerned—was soon suffered to subside.

I trust the young gentlemen will take the remaining step, viz: return to the school, or, if that be now impossible, fully and openly adjust the matter with their teacher. This done, they will be the better qualified to view *his* course and *their own conduct* in a more impartial light, and

the experience thus gained will, inevitably, shed a happy influence over their future.

**ORTHOGRAPHY.** Too many of our Teachers seem to think this whole subject comprised in the single process of spelling, whereas it should embrace a knowledge of the elementary sounds upon which the vocal language is based, with their divisions into vocals, subvocals and aspirates, together with the reasons for these divisions. Next the characters representing these sounds should be taken up, and the name, sounds and classification of each should be explained, and the reasons therefor rendered. To these should succeed the formation of words and their classification into primitive, derivative and compound, together, again, with the reasons for this nomenclature. And, finally, the modes of derivation by prefixes, suffixes, or both, and the meaning, modification and rules for the joining of these additional syllables should be given. And to these rules—once established—I would counsel strict adherence despite all authority, never writing the derivations of “jewel,” or “travel”—by repeating the final “l,” or of “refer” or “confer,”—(that do not change the accent)—by using a single “r.”

After the alphabet is reached, this exercise—designed to be entirely oral—may be conducted somewhat as follows :

*Teacher.* Will you name the first character of the alphabet? All name it.—How many sounds has a? *Ans.* Four. Will you make these sounds? All make them in the order of their depth or gravity, as heard in the words, fate, fat, far, fall.\* Are these sounds vocals, subvocals or aspirates? *Ans.* Vocals. Why? *Ans.* They consist entirely of voice.

*Teacher.* Will you name the second character of the alphabet? All name it. How many sounds has b? *Ans.* One. Will you make it? Is it vocal, subvocal or aspirate? *Ans.* Subvocal. Why? *Ans.* It consists but partly of voice.

*Teacher.* Name the third character of the alphabet. How many sounds has c? *Ans.* Two; one like k, the other like s. When does c sound like k? *Ans.* Before a, o and u. When like s? *Ans.* Before e, i and y. Make the sound of c before a, o and u. Before e, i and y. Are these sounds vocal, subvocal or aspirate? *Ans.* Aspirate. Why? *Because they consist entirely of breath.*

When the alphabet has thus been compassed, and the Teacher made plain the supremacy of the vowel in the formation of syllables, let, for example, the word “legal” be pronounced and the class required to simplify it. Their inability to do so will teach them that a primitive word is *one that cannot be simplified*. Next, let the words “illegal,” “legality” and “illegality” be severally given as examples respectively

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\* These several sounds are obtained by first pronouncing a monosyllable containing one of them; then by omitting all that precedes the vowel; then by omitting all that follows and pronouncing the vowel sound alone;—thus, fate, ate, a; fat, at, a, &c.

of deriving by a prefix, suffix and by both. The use of "il," in these words, for "in," will also lead naturally to an explanation of such changes.

Five or ten minutes in a day spent in exercises similar to the above, and constantly mingled with the daily spelling recitations, will accomplish much, even in a single term, for this sadly neglected branch of an elementary education.

**READING.** Several of our present Teachers are themselves fine readers, and are rapidly raising their schools to their own standards. In a few schools, however, the subject is but indifferently attended to, and in one, prior to my first visitation, apparently not at all. The copious defects in this branch that were pointed out in my last Report, seem nearly to have vanished, and the recommendations therein contained to have been generally adopted, especially by the permanent Teachers of the town.

**GRAMMAR.** No branch is receiving more attention at present than this. Scholars who attend to the subject being, in general, able both to parse and analyze with commendable readiness and accuracy. The text, also, seems to be well understood, and the compositions to possess a good degree of merit.

**GEOGRAPHY.** This branch is also receiving a large share of attention—although a great diversity obtains in the modes of teaching it. Outline maps are in general use, and map drawing is practiced in every school. I think, however, that Teachers are not generally satisfied with their own modes of inculcating this subject, and sincerely believe that the *very* best mode of doing so is as yet undiscovered.

**ARITHMETIC.** This subject is *tolerably* well taught in nearly all the schools of the town. Results are correctly given, but theories are labyrinthian. The following I mean to quote verbatim, though no two of them are from the same school.

**EXAMPLE 1st Teacher.** How much will 9 yards of cloth cost at 3 dollars a yard?

*Pupil.* If 3 dollars buy one yard, 9 will cost 3 times 9, which is 27.

**EXAMPLE 2d. Teacher.** When flour is 6 dollars a barrel, how many barrels can you buy for 36 dollars?

*Pupil.* If it is 6 dollars a barrel, it will buy as many as 6 goes in 36, which is 6.

**EXAMPLE 3d. Teacher.** How many yards of cloth, at 4 dollars per yard, can you buy for 5 barrels of flour at 8 dollars a barrel?

*Pupil.* Five times 8 are 40; as many as 4 goes in 40—which are 10 times.

I regret to add that such examples might be multiplied to a great extent. This mode of chopping logic may save time, but, as the mathematics afford more discipline of mind than any other branch of our common schools, I would respectfully suggest a totally different course.

As an incipient step, the pupil should, in some way, be taught that the leading term of his question—like the answer in kind—belongs *always* to the *predicate*, and *never* to the *subject* of his proposition: or, in language better suited to him, perhaps,—that he must *never* begin his explanation with the leading term. 2d. That he should never use abstract numbers when concrete are given. 3d. That his computations should always be in full, and the “which is,” &c., avoided. Let me apply these rules to the above examples.

Ex. 1. Three dollars is the leading term, because the answer is to be found in money. One yd. costs 3 dollars, and 9 yds. will cost 9 times 3 dollars—9 times 3 dollars are 27 dollars; therefore 9 yds. of cloth at 3 dollars a yard will cost 27 dollars—or, in conditional form,—If 1 yard cost 3 dollars, &c.

Ex. 2. One barrel is the leading term, because the answer is to be found in barrels. If 6 dollars buy one barrel, 36 dollars will buy as many barrels as 6 dollars are contained times in 36 dollars; 6 dollars are contained in 36 dollars 6 times; therefore 36 dollars will buy 6 barrels of flour at 6 dollars a barrel.

Ex. 3. If one barrel of flour costs 8 dollars, 5 barrels will cost 5 times 8 dollars—5 times 8 dollars are 40 dollars; then 40 dollars will pay for as many yds. of cloth at 4 dollars a yard as 4 dollars are contained times in 40 dollars; 4 dollars are contained in 40 dollars 10 times; therefore 5 barrels of flour at 8 dollars a barrel will purchase 10 yards of cloth at 4 dollars a yard.

To teach these forms the Teacher explains the first example of the section alone—then in connexion with the class—finally the class explains alone while he amends if necessary. This will usually effect the object at once. Most of our Teachers are now retained from year to year. I make these suggestions, therefore, that each may recognize and remedy his or her own defects in teaching this branch, about which there is, really, more practical error than any other in the whole routine of common school instruction.

HISTORY. This subject is taught in many of the schools, although it seldom receives the attention its importance demands. In addition to the above branches, those of Algebra, Surveying, Philosophy, Astronomy, Chemistry, Botany, Zoology, Physiology, Book-keeping, &c., are pursued, but are not among the branches prescribed by law.

I have thus endeavored, Gentlemen, by means of the facts collected, partly by myself and partly by the able gentlemen—whose valuable aid it gives me pleasure again to acknowledge—briefly to exhibit both the errors and the excellencies of the schools under your supervision. In my view, the latter very greatly preponderate, notwithstanding I have—with a view to future improvement—expatiated somewhat largely upon the former. Indeed some of these schools are among the very best it has ever been my privilege to visit, and, I sincerely believe, among the best of their grade in the country. Rev. Robert Allyn, Commissioner



of Public Schools for the State, accompanied me in my visitations to a few of these schools, and expressed himself highly gratified with their excellent condition.

But still, the benefits of common school education are greatly abridged by the dictation of parents as to the studies their children should pursue. In several of the schools, the established course of instruction embraces some fifteen different branches—to be taken of course a suitable number at a time—not one-third of which are pursued by one in ten of those who finish their education at these schools. They all enter the higher department, from the schools below, with about equal attainments, and thus continue until ready for promotion to higher branches. But to this the parent objects—wishing his child only “to read, write and cipher.” Where this chimes with the wish of the child, his scholarship is struck down at once. Perceiving his parent neither desires him to excel or preserve his equality, he actually triumphs in his own prospective ignorance. School he views as a bore, and the Teacher a tyrant, and those to be pitied who are left to his exactions. Yet in the studies he does pursue he must still be classed with others, to whom, and not to him, the lessons must necessarily be graduated. This leaves him large time for roguery and mischief, to the serious detriment of the school as well as to himself. Besides, all experience proves, that a child, thus restricted in his studies, will make far less progress in the few to which he does attend, than those who pursue the entire studies of the school. This serious error arises from judging the present by the past, to which, in school matters, it has little or no resemblance. I state it, therefore, as a matter of fact and not of censure, hoping, withal, that parents who are not aware of the pernicious tendencies of such a course, may give these hints a candid consideration.

We have all to regret, Gentlemen, the loss from our board of Rev. A. R. Abbott, by a call to professional labor in a neighboring state. During his residence in this community, I found his society both exceedingly pleasant and profitable, and his aid and advice in my official duties have laid me under high obligations. Mr. Abbott is an intelligent and talented gentleman, and will make himself felt for good in whatever community it shall be his pleasure to reside.

No two of the many years I have sat at this board has the School Committee been composed of the same individuals, and the signs of the times forebode still greater changes yet to come. We separate to-day with slight prospect of assembling again in our present capacity. But, were such mutations but the mere sequents of partizan caprice, they would still come to us laden with both solemnity and instruction. Our very existence is but a succession of changes, the last of which will close its drama, and leave us to relent or rejoice according as we have

ill or well performed the part assigned us by destiny. Impressed with these reflections and a sense of gratitude to you for your aid and support, I cannot but hope, Gentlemen, that how divergent soever our paths may be in future, we may continue to cherish both a kindly regard for each other, as well as a deepening interest in the intellectual and moral elevation of our common community.

Respectfully submitted,

JOHN H. WILLARD,

*Superintendent of Public Schools of the Town.*

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The following list of Books have been adopted by the Committee to be used in the schools of the town.

Fowle and Swan's Spelling Book.  
Swan's Series with Tower's Fourth Reader.  
Smith and Green's Grammar.  
Worcester's Dictionaries.  
Emerson and Greenleaf's Practical Arithmetics.  
Colburn and Stoddard's Mental Arithmetics,  
Sherwin's Common School Algebra.  
Goodrich's History of the United States.  
Worcester's General History.  
Smith and Mitchell's Geography.  
Smith's Astronomy.  
Comstock's Philosophy.  
Silliman's Chemistry.  
Cutter's Physiology.

Dist.	LOCATIONS AND GRADES.	TEACHERS' NAMES.	
		SUMMER TERM.	WINTER TERM.
1	<i>High St., Pawtucket.</i> Grammar Department. Associate Principal. Assistant ———. Intermediate Department. Primary " Assistant.	Ellen C. M. Cooper. Jane Horswell. Mary E. Wilbour. Mary A. Jenks. Mary Wescott.	H. C. Nash. Ellen C. M. Cooper. Hannah M. Wilkinson. Mary A. Jenks Mary Gorton.
2	<i>Church Hill, Pawtucket</i> Grammar Department. Assistant. Intermediate Department. Primary " Assistant.	John H. Willard. Julia Lefavour. Mary E. Burrows. Mary T. Jenks. Lucinda G. Stowe.	John H. Willard. Julia Lefavour. Mary E. Burrows. Mary T. Jenks. Sarah A. Jenks.
3	<i>Wescott Factory.</i> Grammar Department. Primary " Assistant.	H. H. Jenks. Rachel White. Phebe Enches.	Wm. L. Chase. Rachel White. Ellen H. Weedon.
4	<i>Woodville</i>	Martha H. Williams.	Martha H. Williams.
5	<i>Centerdale.</i> Grammar Department. Primary " Assistant.	Caroline A. Hartwell.	Joseph Seagrave. Caroline A. Hartwell.
6	<i>Manton.</i> Grammar Department. Primary " Assistant.	Wm. L. Chase. Lydia B. Dyer. Lydia W. Kenyon.	H. H. Jenks. Lydia B. Dyer. Mary W. Hussey.
7	<i>Fruit Hill.</i>		
8	<i>Sky Hill.</i> Grammar Department. Intermediate " Assistant. Primary " Assistant.	Jenks Mowry. Sarah Sweetland. Catharine Stone. Jane N. Payne.	Jenks Mowry. Sarah Sweetland. Lucinda G. Stowe. Jane N. Payne.
9	<i>East Turnpike.</i>	Angeline Haskell.	Wm. W. Waterman. James C. Collins.
10	<i>Smith's Hill.</i> Grammar Department. Primary " Assistant.	Harris W. Aldrich. Abby W. Thurber.	Harris W. Aldrich. Abby W. Thurber. Eliza O. Yeomans.

The Committee, at the quarterly meeting in January, passed the following resolution and vote :

Believing that important advantages result from a frequent interchange of visits among Teachers, therefore,

*Resolved*, That every Teacher be allowed—without loss of time—to take one day in each school month for the purposes of visitation *only*, and that the Trustees throughout the town be requested to extend a notice of this resolution to the Teachers under their respective charges.

*Voted*, That every district shall, upon being notified by the Clerk, present its bill covering all expenses to the 31st day of May inclusive, and that whatever funds remain in the town treasury to the credit of the school department, after the above bills have been paid, shall be added to the town's appropriation for the year next ensuing, to be again divided among the several districts of the town.

ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
OF THE TOWN OF SMITHFIELD.

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*To the Citizens of the Town of Smithfield, in Town Meeting assembled :*

In offering the present Report, your Committee are happy in saying the cause of education in our town still wears an encouraging aspect. Our schools, with one exception, have been kept both Summer and Winter. The whole average attendance is an increase upon any previous year. The whole number of schools in the thirty-five districts under our supervision has been forty-five ; and the number of teachers employed, at any one time, forty-eight.

The amount of money received for the support of schools was \$9,-277 85, from the following sources, viz :

Town appropriation,	\$4,500 00
Registry tax,	644 56
Old State appropriation,	2,759 19
New " "	1,374 10
	<hr/>
	\$9,277 85

This amount was divided in the following manner. The New State appropriation and one-half of the Old, as by law directed, equally among the several districts, and the other half of the Old State appropriation according to the average attendance of the schools. The town appropriation and registry tax, after deducting \$20 for printing this report, was divided by giving three-fifths to the districts, according to the daily average attendance of their scholars, and two-fifths equally among the thirty-five districts.

No change has been made in the list of books recommended last year. The schools, with few exceptions, have used those approved by the Committee. These exceptions have been in small districts, where the advantage of using the best text-books has hardly been appreciated.

Bearing in mind the importance of correct orthography and proper pronunciation, we have endeavored to put into the hands of every scholar of proper age, Worcester's Primary and Comprehensive Dictionary. This, by an agreement with the publishers, we have been able to do at a trifling expense. The schools have been under the supervision of the Committee as follows:

H. W. King, Nos. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 28, 29.  
 H. Holmes, " 6, 19, 21, 22, 36, 25, 31, 32, 33, 35, 23, 18  
 G. C. Wilson, " 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 24, 26, 27, 34.

The following reports from the several districts may show more fully points of interest connected with each.

#### DISTRICT No. 1.

Summer Term—Abby R. Capron.

Winter Term—Arnold W. Gorey.

This school is among the very best in town. The teacher of the summer term had the charge of it through the previous summer and winter, and she showed herself well qualified for her station. Her government was mild but firm, and her manner quiet and dignified. A remarkable degree of unanimity existed between parents, teacher and scholars, and the labors of the teacher were attended with excellent success. The winter term was also conducted to the entire satisfaction of the Committee, and, it is believed, of both parents and scholars. A large number of visitors were present at the close of each term.

#### DISTRICT No. 2.

Primary School—Lydia A. W. Whitney.

Grammar School—S. S. Scammell.

This school has been very fortunate in its selection of teachers for several years past, and it still sustains the high reputation it has heretofore gained. The teacher of the Grammar School is a gentleman of excellent qualifications in every respect; and he exerts a good influence over the scholars by looking after their welfare, both mentally and morally. The improvement of this school has been great. The teacher of the Primary School has occupied her present position for many years, which is a sufficient recommendation of itself. She is, as ever, much devoted to her business, and fills her place with credit to herself and

profit to her pupils. The citizens generally take a great interest in the school. This is shown in more than one way, but particularly by the large number of visitors present at the close of each term.

#### DISTRICT No. 3.

Emeline M. Mowry, Teacher.

This school has been successfully taught throughout the year, by Miss Mowry, an earnest and devoted teacher, who has proved herself every way worthy of the confidence of the Committee, and of both parents and scholars. She was faithful and devoted to her duties, and her endeavors were rewarded with success. The interest manifested by the school officers of this district is worthy of imitation. The school house has been thoroughly repaired, and painted outside and in, and the expense met by subscription among the citizens.

#### DISTRICT No. 4.

Rhoda Almy, Teacher.

The same teacher has had charge of this school for the last two years, and the improvement that has been made exhibits the advantage that results from employing a good teacher in the same school for a term of years. The teacher has been faithful, patient and persevering, and her labors have been successful. The house in this district is new and commodious, with single desks and seats for each scholar. We learn with pleasure that the citizens have lately raised a subscription to finish the grounds around the house. When this is done it will be a delightful spot.

#### DISTRICT No. 5.

Summer Term.—Renselaer Jillson, Principal; Caroline E. Aldrich, Assistant.

Winter Term.—Elizabeth Paine, Principal; Caroline E. Aldrich, Assistant.

The Teacher of the Summer Term was a young gentleman of excellent ability to teach; active, energetic and faithful. The scholars were generally orderly and well behaved; and, under his care, they made good improvement. We regret that he was obliged to leave the school on account of sickness. He was succeeded by Miss Paine, who kept the remainder of the year. The Committee visited the school soon after its commencement, and thought very favorably of the manner in which it was conducted; but not having been notified when it closed, the improvement of the school can only be estimated by the good reputation of the teachers.

## DISTRICT No. 6.

Primary School—Mary J. Hendrick.

Grammar School—William W. Winsor.

These schools have made a commendable degree of progress during the year. The classes in arithmetic were found to be much in want of oral instruction, and consequently were, on examination, not so prompt as was desirable. The government of the school was very satisfactory. It is to be hoped that some course will be taken by the district to sustain the school throughout the year, which will, without doubt, elevate it a great degree in excellence, if experienced teachers are employed.

## DISTRICT No. 7.

Summer Term—Rebecca Aldrich.

Winter Term—Henry A. Weld.

The Summer Term of this school was small, but the teacher found plenty to do, devoted herself to her work, and a good degree of improvement was made by the scholars. This term was the last in the "Old School House," as it was. After the close of the term, the house was moved to a pleasant and airy location, an addition made to it, thoroughly repaired outside and in, re-seated in modern style, and is now among the pleasantest and most convenient in the town, and a credit to the taxpayers in the district. The teacher of the Winter Term was a young man of thorough qualifications, and though this was his first school, he manifested ability as a teacher and disciplinarian. The progress of the school was commendable.

## DISTRICT No. 8.

Summer Term—Naomi B. Harris.

Winter Term—Arlon Mowry.

The summer term of this school was kept by an experienced teacher, and the school made good progress. Where all have done so well, it may not be proper to draw comparisons; but we must be permitted to say that we think Miss H. one of the best of teachers. The winter term was also taught by a gentleman of considerable experience, who devoted himself to his labors in such a manner as to produce the very best of results. There are many excellent scholars in this school. The house is entirely too small, and we trust the citizens will feel the importance of enlarging it immediately.

## DISTRICT No. 9.

Summer Term—Mary A. Dow.

Winter Term—Leander Mowry, Lydia W. Kenyon.

Miss Dow was young and inexperienced—this being her first effort; but as her qualifications were excellent, she succeeded very well, and

the scholars made good improvement. By devotion to her work, she will make an accomplished teacher. The first two months of the winter term were taught by Mr. Mowry. He was succeeded by Miss Kenyon, an experienced teacher, who taught the remainder of the term—eight weeks. The school closed very auspiciously, and much credit is due the teachers.

## DISTRICT No. 10.

Summer Term—Jane Smith.

Winter Term—Maria H. Brown.

Both teachers acquitted themselves to our satisfaction. Miss Brown not only satisfied us, but parents and scholars unite in awarding her much praise. A tax has been raised for the laudable purpose of repairing and painting the school-house.

## DISTRICT No. 11.

Hannah T. Smith, *Teacher*.

This school, though small, has been under good discipline, and its progress is commendable.

## DISTRICT No. 12.

Summer Term—Mary Mowry.

Winter Term—Amy M. Appleton.

It has been a pleasure to visit this school through the past year.—Teachers of experience and acknowledged ability have been engaged. Presiding faithfully over their charge in a back room of the “old dilapidated meeting house.”

## DISTRICT No. 13.

Summer Term—Adeline Brown.

Winter Term—Albert Mowry.

Miss Brown did well; and, should she continue in the work, will become an accomplished teacher. The winter term was ably taught; but, in consequence of Mr. Mowry's ill health, it was brought to an early close. That interest which is felt elsewhere in preparing children for the great responsibilities that are to devolve upon them, is felt here. Men, having no children at school, have taxed themselves for school purposes. The next report may speak of another tax, and a new school house.

## DISTRICT No. 14.

Primary School—Ellen M. Sayles.

Grammar School—Warren C. Barber.

The Grammar School evidently made some progress; yet there was not that spirit of emulation so desirable among scholars. Mr. Barber's



labors were not characterised by that energy which was prominent in the teaching of his predecessor. Miss Sayles had been a pupil in the Normal School. She was well qualified by education for her task.

#### DISTRICT No. 15.

Summer Term—Mary J. Harris.

Winter Term—Phebe Enches.

This school, during both terms, we believe, was well conducted. Miss Enches has been engaged in this district several years; and in previous reports her teaching has been commended.

#### DISTRICT No. 16.

Primary School—Elizabeth Brown, Caroline F. Pierce.

Grammar School—Amy M. Appleton, John M. Rice.

Where there is a frequent change of teachers, no school of this character can prosper. It should be the aim of large districts like this to procure good teachers, and continue their services through successive terms. This may not have been practicable the past year. We know the present trustees will spare no pains in making the schools what they should be. The schools here have by no means been failures: the teachers were worthy, and the scholars were benefitted by their labors.

#### DISTRICT No. 17.

Summer Term—Mary A. Sweet.

Winter Term—John F. Lawton.

The trustee of this district was fortunate in his selection of teachers. The school was well conducted. Upon each visit of the Committee, "Order reigned,"—not as "in Warsaw"—but under the gentle rule of an able teacher; and at each examination progress was evident.

#### DISTRICT No. 18.

Summer Term—Mary J. Aldrich.

Winter Term—Edwin Mowry.

Under the management of good teachers, this school has done remarkably well; and, though small, several advanced scholars are found in it, who, with all connected, are moving on in the paths of science. Order and quietness reigned within.

#### DISTRICT No. 19.

Ruth D. Turner, *Teacher*.

This school is in excellent order. The pupils have made much progress in their studies, which is no more than could be expected of a

faithful and industrious teacher. The district, to its credit, has recently thoroughly painted and otherwise improved the appearance of the school-house.

## DISTRICT No. 20.

Summer Term—Lavina Bartlett.

Winter Term—Stephen Phillips.

What is said of other good teachers who have succeeded well, may be said of these. The school is not forward; yet some tact is required in its management.

## DISTRICT No. 21.

Summer Term—Aurora Carpenter.

Winter Term—Wm. W. Winsor.

The summer term was taught to the satisfaction of the Committee, who found it under good discipline, and in a state of mental and moral advancement. The winter term was commenced by Emor Smith, who failed in satisfying the Committee; and was followed by Mr. Winsor, under whose discipline the school was soon restored to its former quietness and order, without which no school can be of any benefit. If the parents would visit the school, they would then be qualified to judge of its character, and would effectually prevent imposition on the part of teachers.

## DISTRICT No. 22.

Summer Term—Susan C. Ballou.

Winter Term—James B. Scott.

An experienced teacher may labor earnestly, and a few restless spirits will easily destroy all the results likely to flow therefrom. Such in part, is the story of the summer term. Miss Ballou accomplished all that could be expected under these circumstances. If some of the parents would pay less attention to the *complaints*, and more to the *conduct* of their children, this school would easily be made one of the best in town. The winter term was ably taught by an experienced teacher, under whose care the school was made to take a higher stand than it has hitherto done.

## DISTRICT No. 23.

Charlotte B. Arnold, *Teacher*.

Much praiseworthy effort has been made by the teacher and trustee to raise this school to its proper station among our schools; and though the material is, much of it, none too good, they have succeeded very

well. The teacher's labors would be better appreciated elsewhere. The school-house needs repairing, and removing to a more pleasant situation.

#### DISTRICT No. 24.

Primary School—Elma Owen.

Grammar School—Harvey Holmes.

The teacher in the Primary department has been engaged for several terms, and, by her lady-like deportment, has exercised a good influence over her scholars. She is a teacher of superior attainments and moral worth, and her exertions in behalf of the school have been crowned with success. From the known ability of the teacher in the Grammar School, we expected that much would be accomplished, and we were not disappointed. The teacher appeared to have perfect control over his pupils, and exerted an influence which could not fail to be beneficial.

#### DISTRICT No. 25.

Primary School—Melissa Wilson, Ellen E. Bacon.

Grammar School—Geo. C. Wilson.

Through the enterprise of its citizens, and their zeal in the cause of education, this district is favored with *yearly* schools, which have taken a high rank among the schools of the town. No one can fail to see its beneficial influence, both mental and moral, on the community. Where ignorance prevails, crime is rife; and this seems to be well understood by the people in the district, who have taxed themselves yearly to prevent this result, and have realized in a great measure, their wishes in reference to the young. The Primary School is too large, and should be divided.

#### DISTRICT No. 26.

Lydia E. Congdon, *Teacher*.

We regret to say, that Miss Congdon, who has had charge of this school for a term of years, has been compelled to retire from it at the close of the winter term, on account of declining health. She has been a most faithful teacher, and carries with her the esteem and best wishes of parents and scholars. Under her judicious management, the school has made good progress. Through the liberality of the Manufacturing Company and their Agent, the school is kept the year round, without expense to the scholars. Mr. W. is untiring in his exertions to render the school what it should be.

## DISTRICT No. 27.

Joanna W. Chase, *Teacher*.

Miss Chace has had charge of this school for the last two years, and, under her care, it has been making constant and rapid progress. The teacher was faithful and devoted; the scholars orderly and respectful. A remarkable degree of unanimity existed between teacher and pupils. All appeared united and happy. An uncommon degree of interest was manifested by the parents, which was shown by the large number of visitors present at the close of each term.

## DISTRICT No. 28.

Summer Term—Elizabeth W. Irons.

Winter Term—Mary Foster.

What was predicted in a former report of Miss Irons has been verified. Encomiums would be thrown away; she has changed her calling. Miss Foster, with experience, will fill her place. We will say of each, "she has acted well her part."

## DISTRICT No. 29.

Summer Term—A. J. Winsor.

Winter Term—Naomi B. Harris.

The progress of this school during the year is highly creditable to teachers and scholars. Its advancement has been a source of satisfaction, bearing in mind the good reputation it has enjoyed for several years.

## DISTRICT No. 31.

Summer Term—Sarah Comstock.

Winter Term—John B. Lapham.

Much credit is due Miss Comstock for the interest exhibited in this school. The advancement has been gratifying to the Committee. In the winter, the teacher, though young in his profession, displayed many excellent points which serve to make a good instructor. The school is among the most pleasant in the town, and is an honor to the district.

## DISTRICT No. 32.

Primary School—Mary A. French.

Grammar School—T. F. Meade.

This is a *yearly* school; the Primary School still continuing under the care of its former successful teacher, who labors patiently and arduously for the benefit of her pupils, and is only to be known to

be highly prized. The teacher in the Grammar School has been very successful in bringing the scholars under an excellent state of discipline, combined with industry and much application. Schools thus managed can never fail to prosper, and be a blessing to parents and children.

#### DISTRICT No. 33.

Primary School—Marion Anderson.

Grammar School—Charles C. Peavey.

The citizens in this district have recently voted a tax to continue their schools throughout the year. This is at it should be. The teacher in the lower department is well qualified for a school of greater advancement, which would be, no doubt, more congenial to her feelings. By her patient and persevering efforts, she has been enabled to accomplish much in her vocation. The teacher in the Grammar School is seldom excelled by any one of the same experience in teaching. Under his care, the school has been brought into a very prosperous state. The pupils are active and industrious, and a right spirit of emulation seems to pervade the school.

#### DISTRICT No. 34.

Ruth E. Gaskill, *Teacher*.

The school in this district is very small, and the scholars young. Under such circumstances it is difficult to create an interest; but the teacher appeared anxious to do her best to promote the advancement of her pupils, and she fully met the expectations of the Committee. The school made good progress.

#### DISTRICT No. 35.

Primary School—Ann W. Averill.

Intermediate School—Sarah J. Buffum.

Grammar School—H. Barrows, A. C. Robbins.

This is the only well graded school in the town; and has, in its primary and intermediate departments, been favored with teachers well adapted to their respective situations, who have never failed to interest and exert a wholesome influence over the minds of their pupils. These schools are justly the pride of the district. The Grammar School has been unfortunate for some time past in its teachers, and consequently, though embracing some of the best talent in the place, has not done so well as was anticipated at the commencement of the term. Mr. Barrows was succeeded by A. C. Robbins, under whose short administration the school was reduced to an excellent state of discipline, and promises—if taught successfully in future—to take that place among the

**schools it ought to have done long ago. This district ought to be united with No. 24. If this was done, the people would secure to themselves a much better Grammar School than they can otherwise obtain ; indeed all the schools might be benefited, as well as extended through the year, with but little expense.**

#### DISTRICT No. 36.

**Summer Term—Caroline Yeomans.**

**Winter Term—Mary Jencks.**

**The teacher of the Summer Term, though young, proved herself to be one of no ordinary character, and is destined to become one of the best of teachers. The school succeeded well. During the winter, it was taught by an experienced teacher, who did not succeed so well, owing in a measure, to the presence of some large boys, who were not disposed to render obedience, and became a source of vexation and trial to the teacher, who labored hard, and has the satisfaction of knowing that she did what she could to advance her pupils. The house needs repairing, and should be done immediately.**

#### CONCLUDING REMARKS.

**In surveying the field of our operations during the past year, we are gratified in being permitted to say, that it has been one of much prosperity among the schools in the town, there having been but a limited number of them which the Committee have found it necessary to condemn ; but on the contrary, though they have not come up to that point of perfection which would have been still more gratifying to us, much has been found worthy of the highest praise, and calculated to induce the belief that they have taken a better stand among the best conducted schools of the State than they have heretofore done. Some of them, we believe, are seldom excelled ; especially those where the tax-payers have interested themselves, and raised a sufficient amount to continue them throughout the year.**

**The teachers, generally, have been devoted to their profession ; have ardently striven to arouse the minds of their pupils, to lead them into habits of thought, and to promote a spirit of industry in their respective schools, without which the scholars would be imbibing habits that would prove disastrous, instead of obtaining that knowledge necessary to fit them for the duties of American citizens.**

**In some instances, where the discipline was none too rigid,—and it might be more so in nearly all the schools without any detriment whatever—the teachers have been opposed in the exercise of authority necessary to the progress of the same by parents, who should have**

learned long since, that interference with the teacher is, in effect, bringing sorrow upon themselves in after years, because few not accustomed to authority while young will be inclined to honor their parents in old age.

Another favorable omen that we would speak of, is the increased attention paid to the *cleanliness* of school-rooms, most of which have been found thoroughly purged of filth of every kind, and presenting to the beholder a truly inviting aspect. In some instances, however, but few incitements were to be found in reference to this matter; for, if the floors were kept clean, the walls and desks would not bear an agreeable contrast with them, and if the inside was in order, the outside would belie its appearance within. More care should be exercised in a few of the districts; and every thing in and around the houses should be of such a character that it will be *attractive* rather than forbidding to the scholars.

The trustees, with but few exceptions, have manifested that spirit which indicated that their feelings were forcibly drawn out in behalf of those whose interests they had been appointed to look after. They have been often found in the schools, watching their progress, and rejoicing in every symptom of good. With such guardians, no school will often prove a failure, but must usually succeed. Many of the parents have been much interested in their children; yet it is not to be denied that a still greater interest on their part is *needed*, and *should be accorded* to their offspring.

In the performance of our labors during the year, we have found that they were neither few nor small, as some have supposed them to be, but of sufficient magnitude to call forth much exertion to guard well the interests of the 2,500 children now being trained and educated in our public schools. With what untiring zeal ought we to watch over the development of mind and formation of character that are so soon to succeed us on the theatre of life! Their proper training is the only sure guarantee to us that the institutions we now prize and enjoy, will be preserved inviolate in future time.

Respectfully submitted by the Committee.

H. W. KING,  
H. HOLMES,  
GEO. C. WILSON.

No. of Dist.	LOCAL NAME.	Amount ap- portioned to District.	Amount drawn by Dist., May 1.	Amount ex- pended by Dist. May 1.	Amount raised by District.	Number of scholars reg- istered.	Average attendance.	Length of school term in months and weeks.
1	Mansfield.....	\$200 11	\$200 11	\$176 62		42	33	8m 2w
2	Slatersville .....	511 35	511 35	684 33	\$286 04	158	130	11 0
3	Branch .....	190 07	190 07	189 87	29 00	41	26	8 0
4	Union .....	192 58	192 58	182 63		37	22	9 3
5	Globe .....	325 61	325 61	314 19		94	70	7 3
6	Manville .....	392 98	286 00	288 00		80	53	7 0
7	Staples .....	177 52	177 52	164 97	600 00	32	19	8 0
8	Aldrich .....	227 72	227 72	243 11		40	30	9 3
9	Sayles Hill .....	172 50	172 50	186 47		17	12	8 0
10	Mowry .....	195 09	195 09	214 12	125 00	28	21	10 0
11	Andrews .....	169 99	169 99	169 99		27	17	10 0
12	Latham .....	157 44	100 00	104 50		11	9	7 0
13	Evans .....	180 03	115 00	166 80		27	19	8 0
14	Greenville .....	358 24	358 24	511 54	158 30	119	86	9 2
15	Stillwater .....	172 50	172 50	167 50		31	19	9 0
16	Georgiaville.....	325 61	325 61	332 00		94	68	8 0
17	Allenville.....	222 70	222 70	235 00		54	41	9 0
18	Dexter .....	169 99	130 00	147 67		17	13	6 2
19	+Welcome Angell...	167 48	107 48			35	16	8 0
20	Woonasquetucket..	245 29	245 29	245 29		51	45	11 0
21	Albion .....	250 31	175 00	250 00		55	40	7 0
22	Lime Rock .....	237 76	237 76	236 87		46	35	7 0
23	Moshassuc .....	237 76	179 00	236 74		50	44	7 0
24	Central Falls.....	491 27	491 27	497 43		170	136	7 2
25	Bernon .....	521 39	521 39	892 00	248 63	280	170	11 0
26	Hamlet.....	235 25	235 25	269 05		74	39	11 2
27	Sayles .....	164 97	164 97	172 62		23	15	8 0
28	+Spragues .....	202 62	150 00			42	25	8 3
29	+Dan'l Angell's .....	180 03	180 03			29	20	10 0
31	*Olney Factory .....	197 60	197 60			30	24	7 0
32	Lonsdale .....	526 41	526 41	696 09	242 53	180	150	11 0
33	Valley Falls .....	388 36	388 36	354 30		117	91	10 0
34	Blackstone .....	197 60	197 60	197 60		31	25	9 1
35	Central Falls.....	531 43	531 43	523 00		229	156	7 0
36	+Ashton.....	240 27	100 00			28	21	8 0

\* Have not made returns as required by law.

† Returns not full.



ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
OF THE  
Town of Cumberland.

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The School Committee of the town of Cumberland present to their fellow citizens the following Report of their doings in reference to the schools, during the past year.

At the meeting for organization, held according to law, on the second Monday in June, 1854, there was not a quorum present, and the choice of the necessary officers and sub-committees was postponed to the regular quarterly meeting in July. This was unfortunate, as it occasioned a delay in visiting the schools just commencing, and also prevented an examination of some which closed in the interim. Without drawing an offensive line of distinction, yet with a view to encourage faithfulness on the part of those who are appointed to look after the interests of the schools, we deem it but just to state, that those members of the Committee who reside at Woonsocket have been generally punctual in their attendance upon meetings of the Board; and this, notwithstanding their arduous duties in the special care of all the schools in that village, comprising full one-half of all the pupils in the town.

Now, without intending any judgment upon the past, we may be permitted to speak for the future, and to express the hope that all who are called to official duties in regard to the interests of education, will strive to discharge those duties faithfully. We all agree, that teachers should set such an example, not only because they are paid for their services, but also because its influence is essential in moulding the habits of the young. If it be required of the teacher, it is justly demanded also of

trustees and committees.\* Every thing we do, and the spirit in which we do it, exerts an influence good or bad, both on ourselves and those around us. Every act is a seed that will bear fruit. And when we are placed in intimate relations to the young, we should remember that we are scattering seed upon a virgin soil, which will return a luxuriant harvest, either of wheat or tares.

Some of the Districts have neglected to make full returns. This is a matter of too much importance to be passed over lightly. Especially will it appear to be so, when a District, by such neglect, forfeits its claim to the appropriation for the next year. The law requires that each District shall have, at least, four months of schooling in the year. In District No. 12 we have a return of only fourteen weeks. Of the summer term we have no account; and, if the law be strictly adhered to, that District will draw nothing from the public monies which may be appropriated for the current year. We will only add, it is the duty of teachers and trustees to fill out the blanks, and it would be well to attend to it at the close of each term, and forward them at once to the Visiting Committee.

The sums of money entrusted to our care were as follows, viz.:

Old State appropriation	-	-	-	\$1578 87
New State appropriation	-	-	-	785 20
Town appropriation	-	-	-	2000 00
Registry tax	-	-	-	212 00
Total				\$4576 07

Of this amount, \$785 20 was divided equally among the Districts, as by law provided. Of the balance, one-half was divided equally among the Districts, and the other half according to the average attendance of the scholars. This gave to the several Districts the following sums respectively:—

Consolidated District,	\$1511 55	District No. 12	\$192 91
District No. 3	200 66	" " 13	343 50
" " 4	169 47	" " 14	195 13
" " 5	147 50	" " 15	175 36
" " 6	181 63	" " 16	231 34
" " 7	195 37	" " 17	170 00
" " 8	170 65	" " 18	169 99
" " 9	174 22		
" " 10	165 98	Total,	\$4576 07
" " 11	180 57		

\* Since the above was written, we have been informed that some of the Committee state, as a reason for non-attendance, that they are not paid for their time, and they cannot afford to sacrifice it. Are they unreasonable?

In addition to moneys received from the State and Town, the Consolidated District at Woonsocket assessed a tax of \$1 25 on the thousand, amounting to \$2,256 62, for repairs of school houses and support of schools.

The Committee on Books, consisting of Messrs. Robinson, Breed and Cleveland, reported at the April meeting of the Board, in favor of introducing Town's series of Reading Books into the schools and the report was unanimously adopted, to take effect with the commencement of the Spring terms. Said books may be had at the bookstore of Chas. E. Aldrich in Woonsocket, and at very low prices, if purchased prior to the 25th of November next.

At the final meeting of the Committee, held by adjournment, at Woonsocket, on the 14th day of May, the sub-committee reported that it was expedient to substitute Leach and Swan's Arithmetic for Greenleaf's. The Report was unanimously adopted, to take effect with the Fall or Winter Terms. This work may be had as above, in exchange for Greenleaf's, at fifteen cents per copy.

Your Committee have not made these changes without due consideration. It is believed that although a passion for new things may be injuriously indulged, producing or promoting instability of character, yet the mind tires of sameness; and, to the child especially, a new book, like a new dress, is a healthy stimulus. But, aside from this, we have judged these changes proper, on the ground that the new are superior to the old; and we trust the parents will see that their children are promptly supplied with all that may be needed. For further suggestions, we commend to your careful consideration the following Report of the Visiting Committee to the School Committee of Cumberland:—

GENTLEMEN,—I ask leave to lay before you the results of my labors and observations, in connection with the public schools, during the year just closed.

As I did not receive my appointment till the second Monday in July, I cannot speak of matters prior to that date. Since then, I have been able to visit all the schools (when notified,) according to law, except at the close of the winter terms in Districts Nos. 3 and 18. But another member of the Board visited the former in my stead, bringing back a very favorable report; and of the latter, it is safe to presume (if we may judge from the success of the same gentleman in No. 10,) that it was unqualifiedly a good school.

Of the sixteen schools committed to my special charge, I can, in general terms, speak favorably. They have been conducted, on the whole, as well as previous experience would have allowed us to expect. No one can be set down as an entire failure; many have done well; and a considerable number deserve to be ranked in the first class of

common district schools. As instances worthy of special mention, perhaps I might properly allude to several Districts in which the examinations were highly gratifying. This applies to Nos. 3, 7, 8, 10, 11 and 14—the Winter terms. The qualifications of the teachers in these schools are decidedly good, and the general condition of the Districts seemed favorable, and hence their prosperity. In Districts Nos. 7, 8 and 11, I met large companies of visitors—an indication of interest in the subject of education highly favorable to successful teaching. But these allusions embrace generally the *fortunate*, as well as successful teachers. Others have labored well, and are to be commended; but they were not surrounded with circumstances favorable to a show of great success. If the circumstances of the different schools were alike, it would not be difficult to institute a rigid comparison which would do justice to all parties. Regularity of attendance, without which we have no right to expect successful teaching, depends much upon the distance of the children's homes from the school room, the location and condition of the roads, as well as the attractiveness of the school. Then the native talent of the pupils must be taken into account; for there is as much difference between schools as teachers, and I have witnessed instances in this respect which were altogether discouraging. The teacher may be as faithful as the slave to his task, and at the same time, have but little to encourage him. In such a case, he is not prompted to duty by the promise of flattering results, but only by his conscientious regard for the right. And were we to judge his capacities as a teacher by his apparent success in advancing his pupils, we should do him great wrong.

The schools at Woonsocket do not belong to my particular field of labor; but, as one of four whose duty it is to visit them, I may be allowed to say that they are in a highly prosperous state. The High School still enjoys the labors of Wm. H. Farrar, A. M., a gentleman remarkable for clear thinking and thorough teaching. The Intermediate department is under the charge of Mr. P. Verry, as heretofore, and presents the uniform aspect of a well-disciplined and a well-taught school. These gentlemen have competent and faithful assistants, and, under such management, the two departments offer every inducement to those who seek a thorough education. In addition to these, there are four primary departments, making, in all, six schools, with nine teachers and 727 scholars.

It should never be forgotten, that the co-operation of parents with teachers is absolutely essential to good schools. This can be manifested in ways too numerous to mention,—ways which will suggest themselves to the thoughtful from time to time, and by which teachers will feel that they are not isolated, but rather intimately connected by

endearing ties with all whose children are committed to their care.— The authority of the teacher must receive the sanction of home, and the child be made to feel, that disobedience to it, is a violation of the parental will. If the wisdom or justice of the teacher is doubted, the question is not to be settled by discussions with those who are subject to his authority. If parents are dissatisfied, it is far better to seek redress through the appointed channels, or even to withdraw their children from school than to infuse the slow poison of discontent into their minds, and induce them to yield only a reluctant obedience.

I have been once consulted in a case where a lad had sorely tried the patience of the teacher, not by committing and flagrant act, but by many small offences. The purpose seemed to be, not to perpetrate any single deed that would justify expulsion, but to practice petty annoyances, and never to do precisely as the teacher desired. My advice was, that where, as in that case, the pupil knew his duty just as well as the teacher did, yet persisted in the practice of minor offences, expulsion was the rightful remedy, if the teacher was not able, or did not desire to inflict corporeal punishment.

There is, in my judgment, no one thing more to be deplored, than a defect in government. It affects the moral character in such a way as to open the door for nameless vices. Accordingly I have counselled teachers to establish order for the first thing. If they cannot do this, they can do nothing else as it ought to be done. "One thing at a time" should be the motto. If a teacher attempts to hear a recitation and to answer a number of miscellaneous questions from different parts of the school room at the same time, it is scarcely possible that he should have either a perfect recitation or an orderly school. I have been pained to see a reading class, for instance, called upon the floor and set to reading, while the teacher was walking about the school room to look after the idlers, answer questions, and, in short, attend to anything which might turn up. I have uniformly protested against this practice as injurious to the school in every respect. My greatest anxiety has been to see such government as would not only be favorable to a healthy moral culture, but would also make the school room attractive to all, by rendering duty pleasant and easy. To this end, the help of parents is confidently invoked for the security of good order.

In regard to the relative merits of the teachers employed in this town, I deem it unnecessary to submit any extended remarks. Of course we have the usual variety of quality, and nearly all deserve encouragement. Many, however, should take lessons in *teaching*, before attempting to practice. Few, comparatively, have any distinct notion of what constitutes a good school before entering upon the work, and having no standard beyond themselves, they seldom rise to a distinguished position,

I am sure it ought to be otherwise. The mass of teachers might be greatly improved by meeting and criticising different modes of teaching, and especially if they would form a class and invite some one of acknowledged skill to drill them. Or, what is better, let them enter the Normal School at Providence, and, though it be only for a single term, it will increase their power and efficiency very largely. If three-fourths of the Districts in town would give the teachers their time for the first week, on condition they should spend it in the Normal School, with a view to improve in the art of teaching, I am confident the loss of that week would be made up to them fourfold in a single term.

It is true, one may attend the Normal School and be no teacher. They do not profess to work miracles there. They cannot create gifts; they only improve them. Some have peculiar aptness for teaching; and such persons will be inventive, and they will be good teachers at any rate. Yet even *they* might improve by being brought in contact with minds of kindred qualities, as "iron sharpeneth iron." And I am certain the time is approaching when it will be the general sentiment of the people, that, before one assumes the responsible position of the teacher, he shall take lessons in the art, and try his skill on a class of his equals, whose matured perceptions and ready criticisms shall be a sufficient defence against his blunders. I do not make these remarks with a view to disparage the teachers of this town, for I presume they will not suffer in comparison with an equal number elsewhere; but I desire to call attention to the facilities for improvement in this direction, and to urge upon all who intend to teach the importance of securing the best possible help in the profession.

My confidence in the utility of Normal Schools is such, that, if I were a trustee for my District, I should be reluctant to engage a candidate who had never taught, unless he had attended such a school. One term there would be worth far more than an equal term of actual teaching. I think any man will agree with me if he will step into the State Normal School, Broad Street, Providence, and spend even an hour. Teachers, also, cannot fail to receive profitable suggestions even from very brief visits.

Before engaging candidates who have taught in other towns, trustees would do well to require of them certificates of their good success; for if they have not succeeded well elsewhere, there will be poor encouragement to try them here. And they ought also to insist that a candidate shall repair at once to the Examining Committee, in order that time may be given to find another, if need be, before all the good teachers are engaged.

The school-houses throughout the town are generally in a good condition. They are not all supplied, as they should be, with scrapers, mats, and other appliances necessary to cleanliness; yet, with one or

two exceptions, they have been kept very neatly. It is pleasant to witness the changes which a dozen years have wrought in behalf of the young. New and comfortable school-houses have taken the places of old ones, or old ones have been remodeled "as good as new." The art of teaching has received a corresponding impulse, and the almost universal attention among teachers to the neatness of their school-rooms and pupils, gives promise of a healthier moral tone.

One thing is wanting in every school-house in the town,—a District Library. I do not know that the plan of a Library to circulate through the District would be feasible. I am not informed as to the operation of it in other towns. Possibly the difficulty of securing good Librarians and a careful returning of the books, might be urged against it; but I am quite certain that a library, containing some Encyclopedia or other important works of reference, might be very profitable to the scholars, and, through them, to the people at large. In connexion with this topic, I would suggest the propriety of supplying each desk with a full set of the text-books used in the schools, either at the expense of the Districts or the Town. Some teachers, in the beginning, are limited in their means, and they use the books belonging to their pupils. Others come from other towns, and they cannot afford to keep different sets of books. It would be much better if each desk could be supplied at the public expense. For, if the teacher may borrow, so as to oblige two scholars to use one book, so may scholars be neglectful, or parents penurious, leaving their children to depend upon others.

Let every member of the school be supplied with all the text-books used, and it will conduce much to that quietness which is an essential element in a pleasant school.

It will be seen by reference to the Statistical Table herewith presented, that the average length of time for which schools have been kept in sixteen Districts, is about eight months. It is a question for the people to decide whether justice is fairly done by the children, in giving them seven or eight months of schooling in the year. And the importance of this matter is increased when it is remembered that many families are so situated that only a part of their children can be spared at the same time, and many of them attend school only three or four months, or about one-fourth of the time. Now, it appears to me, that every District should have three terms, say of twelve or thirteen weeks each; the first beginning early in April, the second about the first of September, and the third after a short vacation, in December. Such an arrangement would leave a large portion of March, July and August, for vacations—seasons when the travelling and temperature of the weather generally interfere seriously with school going and study. It would afford sufficient time in the pleasant season for the younger children to attend as much as would be consistent with their physical health, and leave the

Winter Term for the special benefit of those who are able to make close application, and who ought to have more attention than teachers can give them under the present order of things. This would approximate the grading system, which operates as favorably in schools as in the various departments of mechanical labor. The Summer school would be conducted more on the principle of a Primary department, giving greater freedom to the sportive and buoyant elements of childhood, while the colder season would be devoted more emphatically to work.

Let any one witness a protracted examination of a mixed school, composed of pupils from four to twenty years of age. The little ones read, spell, tell their names, ages, what town they live in, who is Governor, and sit down. For three or four long hours they sit or lie down, or do something as best they can to kill time, without a particle of interest in the proceedings. And this, with unimportant variations, is their daily experience, with the addition, perhaps, of some slight punishment for restlessness, which not even an adult could avoid. I have repeatedly advised teachers, that the remedy for this uneasiness, is not correction, but *exercise* in the open air; and that, whenever children were uncomfortable, either from the want of tone in the atmosphere <sup>from</sup> protracted confinement, or from any other cause, they <sup>should</sup> have a recess, or some equivalent change in their exercise. This, of course, may cause some confusion in the school, and, at all events, must take the time of the teacher, when it ought to be given to other matters. But it is better that it should be so, than that the health of the little ones should be impaired (as it often is,) or the temper should be soured by frequent corrections. When we consider that both the physical and moral nature must suffer under the combined influence of a bad atmosphere, and unnatural restraint, we are under the most solemn obligations to make our arrangements accord with the health and virtue of the young. If we cannot do as we would, we must approach as near as possible to it. We are able to have from nine to ten months of schooling in the year, and the time may be so divided as to give to all the pupils far greater advantages than they have under the present arrangements. These suggestions do not, perhaps, apply to small schools of twelve or fifteen scholars; but I think they are applicable to nine or ten of the sixteen schools under my supervision, where none under six or seven years of age ought to attend, except when the weather will allow of ample recesses, so that they may spend much of their time out of doors.

That we are subjecting children too young to the ordinary discipline of the school-room scarcely admits of a doubt. Premature development of the mind is injurious, and must inevitably bring the body to a premature grave; and this calamity must be greatly hastened, if, at the



same time, free exercise in the open air is denied. Parents not unfrequently send their children to school to "get them out of the way," so that work or pleasure may not be interrupted; always taking for granted that they are safe in the hands of the teacher. If we could always have schools *adapted* to the *wants* of children, this would be well enough. But a mixed school of all ages, subjected to strict discipline and severe application, where study is the rule and recreation the exception, is not the place for very young children.

To carry out these suggestions, of course demands a larger appropriation of money for school purposes. If the town would raise \$3,000 to this end, our schools would average to continue as long as would be desirable. And shall we be satisfied with any thing less than the best we are able to do? Is there any blessing we can bestow upon our sons and daughters that can compare with such an education as may be obtained at a thorough Public School? In every other department of business, men are accustomed to ask what can be done to increase the profits. And is it not wisdom to ask what we can do to increase the efficiency of our Public Schools? Every interest that is dear to us,—political, pecuniary, humane and moral,—will be promoted by universal education. Let knowledge, accompanied by that moral principle which alone renders power a safe acquisition, be generally diffused, embracing a wide range of topics, and the sources of pauperism and crime will be dried up. The idler, whose "brain is the devil's workshop," will give place to the industrious, thinking and successful worker; and the worker will, in the main, be the intelligent and upright citizen.

The relation of ignorance to pauperism and crime is natural; and yet it may be doubted whether the people generally realize it fully. Our alms-houses and prisons demonstrate it beyond all question. If our personal knowledge does not confirm this statement, figures will. In a Report on Pauperism in England, which is before me, it is affirmed, that of 2,725 paupers, only 14 could write well, two-thirds could read only imperfectly, and more than half could neither read nor write at all. As to crime, the result is similar. In the four *best* instructed counties in England, there was, on an average, "one school to every 701 inhabitants, and one criminal conviction to 1108 inhabitants. In the four *worst* instructed counties, there was, on an average, one school to 1501 inhabitants, and one criminal conviction to 550 inhabitants." On these facts, an eminent writer makes the following reflections:—

"It is with grief that I contemplate the mistaken zeal, the illogical reasoning, of certain philanthropists, and even of certain governments, who bestow so much pains upon prisons, and neglect schools. They allow crime to spring up, and vicious habits to take root by the utter neglect of all moral training and of all education in children; and when crime is grown, and is strong and full of life, they attempt to cope with it; they try to subdue it with the terror of punishment, or to mitigate it

in some degree by gentleness and kindness. After having exhausted all their resources both of thought and of money, they are astonished to find that their efforts are vain. And why? Because all they do is in direct opposition to common sense. To correct is very important, but to prevent is far more so. The seeds of morality and piety must be early sown in the heart of the child, in order that they may be found again, and be made to shoot forth in the breast of the man whom adverse circumstances may have brought under the avenging hand of the law. *To educate the people is the necessary foundation of all good prison discipline.* It is not the purpose of a penitentiary to change monsters into men, but to revive in the breasts of those who have gone astray the principles which were taught and inculcated to them in their youth, and which they acknowledged and carried into practice in former days, in schools of their infancy, before passion and wretchedness and bad example and the evil chances of life had hurried them away from the paths of rectitude."—*Cousin's Report on Education in Holland.*

In our own country, we have a mass of facts leading to the same conclusion concerning ignorance as the natural parent of crime. In Professor Potter's "School and Schoolmaster," a work which every parent, pupil and teacher ought to read and digest, I find the following (p. 141) :—

"If, then, education has no tendency to diminish crime, so that a person, after having enjoyed its advantages, is as likely to commit crime as the ignorant, we should expect, on examining the records of our courts and prisons, to find the same proportion between the instructed and uninstructed among the convicts as among the whole population. In other words, we should expect to find 28 convicts able to read and write to every one unable to do so. Now what is the fact? If we take the whole number of convictions in this State [N. Y.] for the last two years, in Courts of Record and at Special Sessions, we find, not 1 in 29 who is unable to read, but 1 in 2; showing that the tendency to crime among the ignorant is 14 1-2 times greater than it ought to be, on the supposition that education has no tendency to diminish crime. An examination of the Auburn prison, made something more than a year ago, gave, out of 244 prisoners, but 59 who could read well, and but 39 who could read and write.

"In the New Penitentiary of Philadelphia, out of 217 prisoners received during the year 1835, but 85 could read and write, and most of these could do either the one or the other in but a very imperfect manner. Facts of this kind might be adduced to almost any extent. By showing that the proportion of uneducated convicts is much greater than that of uneducated inhabitants, they seem to me to *demonstrate* that ignorance is one of the great highways to crime, and that, in proportion as men are left without instruction, in that proportion they are likely to become convicts."

In view of such facts, I ask again, why we should not do all in our power to diffuse the blessings of education among all the people? It will, in the end, make the community rich in all that is worthy of the name. It costs us about \$2,000 a year to support our paupers. And while we should grudge nothing that is essential to the comfort of the unfortunate, we ought to use our means of prevention as well as mitigation. Let us increase our appropriation, and then our vigilance in securing a better attendance upon the schools, and, in the meantime, mingle more

of moral influence in our system of teaching, and we cannot fail to realize immense good from our efforts.

By looking at the table of the Winter Terms, it will be seen that the average attendance was about twenty-eight per cent. below the number registered. Now this is too great a disparity. That strict attention which is so essential to success in business, ought to be carried thoroughly into the educational department. The child does not lose merely his lessons when he stays at home unnecessarily, but he loses in vigor of character. The laxity indulged in youth will become an element in manhood; the habits formed during the process of education will, most probably, become the habits of riper years.

Then there is a class of children, generally the offspring of ignorant and degraded parents, who will not attend school unless compelled to do so. We need a law by which we can send them to the Reform School unless they will be persuaded to attend faithfully the Public Schools. Such children are not numerous, except in large villages; but there are some in all parts of the town, and wherever they are, they ought to be regarded as subjects of charity, and entitled to the privileges of an education as well as the more fortunate children around them. At present, I believe, no child can be sent to the Reform School, except for the commission of some offence; but I hope some provision will ere long be made, by which those who are on their way to the prison will graduate with honor from an intervening institution.

But whatever we do, either in the way of raising money, or seeking the enactment of better laws in reference to vagrant children, one thing more we need, in order to make the most of what has been already done, and that is, a more thorough superintendence of the schools. The law contemplates two visits to a Term, one near the beginning, and the other near the close. It is really visiting a school about once in three months! What other business is subjected to so loose a supervision? At the first visit, we counsel with the teacher; but we cannot know how he succeeds till the closing visit, and then, whatever may have been the mistakes, or however inferior the character of the school, the money has been expended, the time wasted, and the only remedy left us is to regret the misfortune and try again. There can be no doubt that both teachers and pupils would accomplish much more, and would work with better heart, if they could often come in contact with an intelligent and faithful Superintendent, whose intercourse with the first class of teachers would make him rich in suggestions of great practical value. If the town should raise \$3,000 for the schools, and devote one-tenth of that sum to the supervision of them, it would, I think, be a judicious movement. One half day is usually given to the closing examination of a school. This will do for some of the smaller schools; but when

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there are from 25 to 40 pupils, the effect would be much better if a whole day were devoted to them, and all their studies faithfully reviewed.

Whether the people are yet prepared to coincide with these views, I cannot say ; but I am quite confident that the public mind leans in this direction, and that, sooner or later, we shall generally come to the conclusion that a more effectual supervision is essential to securing the greatest possible good from the money appropriated. The town of Cumberland is probably in advance of most of the towns in the State in her efforts for universal education ; and this should encourage her citizens to press forward and secure a place in the front rank of that noble army which proposes to establish the reign of intelligence and virtue in every human habitation.

Respectfully submitted,

J. BOYDEN, JUNR.,

*Visiting Committee.*

CHRISTOPHER ROBINSON, *Chairman.*

JAMES M. COOK, *Secretary.*

JOSEPH WEATHERHEAD.

JOSEPH B. BREED,

BENJ. FESSENDEN,

GEORGE C. CLEAVELAND,

MOWRY TAFT.

S. W. RAZEE,

DANIEL WHIPPLE,

WM. H. PIERCE,

JOHN BOYDEN, JUNR.,

D. M. CARGILL,

*School Committee.*

STATISTICAL TABLE.

Summer Term.						Winter Term.					
DISTRICTS.		TEACHERS.	Time in months.	Wages per month.		TEACHERS.	Time in months.	Wages per month.			
No.	Name.			Whole no. scholars.	Average attendance.			Whole no. scholars.	Average attendance.		
3	Union,	Emily Hoag,	3 7-9	\$18	29 20	Emily Hoag,	4 3-4	\$21	43 30		
4	Ballou,	Marion Whipple,	3 3-4	16	27 12	T. S. Darling,	3 1-4	22	25 20		
5	Tower Hill.					Julia M. Follett,	7 1-4	18	11 6		
6	Grant,	Electa R. Fisher,	4	20	35 25	Joel F. Fales,	2 3-4	22	32 24		
7	Plain,	Abigail Peck,	4	24	31 26	S. E. Batcheller,	4	24	33 25		
8	Tingley,	Frances E. Follet,	4	20	21 16	Frances E. Follett,	3 4-5	26	29 21		
9	Ar. Mills,	Olney Capron,	3 1-2	22	23 17	Olney Capron,	4	24	23 17		
10	Cargill,	D. B. Nichols,	2 3-4	16	23 15	Darwin M. Cargill,	3	28	24 16		
11	Razee,	No return.				Ruth A. Thompson,	4 1-2	26	31 27		
12	Kent,	No return.				J. T. Rood,	3 1-2	32	36 21		
13	Valley Falls,	Henry Maxfield,	4	36	68 50	Henry Maxfield,	4	36	73 54		
13	" "	Mary E. Bartlett,	4	20	75 40	M. E. Bartlett,	4	20	75 50		
14	A. Ballou,	M. A. Arnold,	4	16	35 27	Mary A. Arnold,	4 1-2	24	38 31		
15	Pound,	M. M. Mowry,	6	16	33 19	Ellen Carpenter,	3 3-4	16	25 17		
16	Cum. Hill,	S. E. Batcheller,	5	24	48 33	George L. Sayles,	3	31	46 34		
17	Jenckesville,					Sarah E. Jencks,	7 1-4	16	26 14		
18	Clark,	Sarah Cook,	3 1-2	16	22 13	D. M. Cargill,	3 1-10	30	21 16		

CONSOLIDATED DISTRICT.

No.	TEACHERS.	Wages per Year.	Whole No. of Scholars.	Average Attendance.
1	Louisa L. Legg,	\$200	115	86
2	Lucy M. Smith,	200	91	65
19	Helen F. Mowry,	200	119	90
20	Rachel Thayer,	200	123	60
Intermediate.	{ Perley Verry.	450	133	104
	{ Medora Cook,	200		
Gram-mar.	{ Wm. H. Farrar,	800	146	122
	{ Sarah W. Stanton,	300		
	{ Hannahetta Payne,	300		

ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
OF THE  
TOWN OF SCITUATE.

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*To the town of Scituate, in Town Meeting assembled, the School Committee of the town respectfully present the following Report.*

There is no subject to which your attention is called, of greater importance than the education of your children, and the care of the public schools involves weighty responsibilities. Money laid out for school-houses and their appropriate furniture, and expended for teachers, is well invested and spent. No where can we expect larger returns or a surer interest. The prosperity and honor of the town are associated in this enterprize, with the advantage to families and individuals.

Rhode Island occupies at this time a proud position in her Common School system which is justly considered as in advance of some other States. The interest felt by our Commonwealth in Education, was never greater than now. The good results already reached have stimulated the public mind to fresh and augmented exertions for further advancement in our common school education. Last year the State made greater appropriations for the schools than ever before, and our town nobly advanced on preceding expenditures.

May not then your committee feel confident in having your earnest attention to a statement of their doings, a report of the schools where your choicest treasures are deposited, and some suggestions for an onward progress.

The committee have held twelve meetings during the year for the transaction of business relating to the public schools, and about forty-one days have been spent in visiting them, making in all eighty-three visits. Time has also been given by one of the committee, besides these meetings and visits, to examining and hearing teachers who did not attend the regular meetings appointed for that purpose. The clerk of the board has given much attention to the examining of returns, and drawing orders on the treasurer.

We have recommended the introduction of Webster's School Series of Dictionaries in our schools, believing that the general use of them for obtaining accurate definitions of words, assisting in the study of Grammar, and the practice of composition, would be of great value.

The committee have approbated the vote of No. Six, to divide their district, it being inconveniently large, and they have given their approval to sites chosen for new school-houses, one in the old district, and the other in the new, which has been organized as No. 19.

In taking up the schools as they are numbered, to give you a brief account of each, we would make the preliminary remark, that although we speak favorably of the doings of teachers and scholars in most of the schools, we are well satisfied that a higher grade of qualifications in the teachers, and more experience, would have secured more satisfactory results, and placed our scholars upon a higher standard of learning. Indeed, your committee would state that, in their opinion, *this* is the great and pressing want, namely, well educated and able teachers, and until that demand is supplied the schools cannot well advance upon their present gradation. Teachers ought not only to possess a clear and definite knowledge of the studies to be taught, but they should be instructed how to impart their information, and how to deal with various minds, and conduct so as to secure order, love and confidence. Every grace of manner, charm of character, and literary and scientific attainment, in union with the highest moral and religious cultivation, may come into play in a teacher's vocation, and enable him the more successfully to stamp a worthy impress upon plastic minds.

#### DISTRICT No. 1.

This school in the Summer term was conducted by a teacher who had instructed it for several preceding periods, with success and approbation. Self-possessed, accurate and pains-taking, the scholars made improvement under her care. In the Winter the young man who here commenced the professional life of a teacher, evinced an aptness to teach, application to his duties, and an ability to govern. His success was very flattering.

## DISTRICT No. 2.

The largest school in the town, and taught both Summer and Winter by the teacher of the previous Winter term. The school has risen under his care, and sustains a high reputation. An assistant was employed for a few weeks during the winter, and it is to be regretted that her labors were suspended on the pretence of getting a longer school for the same money. Two sisters, one following the other, who was called away to instruct a school out of town, with commendable talent and success, for a limited period, conducted the primary department.

Ninety-six scholars were registered, with an average attendance of sixty-eight, a number altogether disproportional to the labors of one teacher, whoever he may be. That so much success attended the school, was due to the extraordinary aptitude and vigorous exertions of a teacher whose health and strength well nigh sunk under the unwise and overtasked effort. In Arithmetic and Grammar there were classes not surpassed in any of the other schools. Whispering seemed to be done away. This reform was brought about chiefly by constituting the whole school as observers and reporters of this misdemeanor,—the informers to give private accusations against the delinquents to the teacher, and he not to reveal their names, and to take time convenient, sometimes several days after the offence, to reprimand the offender.—The committee, while rejoicing in the reformation, and it has been very great in this school, are not without their doubts as to the propriety of encouraging scholars to inform the one against the other. The plan has also been introduced into No. 18, where it has in like manner accomplished a reform. If there are no malevolent motives in the informers, and they are actuated by a desire to promote the welfare of the school and secure the pleasure of the teacher, no harm may ensue, other than their attention being drawn away, and we are informed that appeals were made to them as to the evils of the practice, and a vote obtained from the scholars, to discontinue whispering. We have thrown out this item as a contribution to the remedies for the evil, which teachers and others may take into consideration. Corporal punishment has not been resorted to in this school, but the authority of look and voice has been effectually employed.

## DISTRICT No. 3.

A young lady took charge of this school in Summer, of good education and pleasing mode of tuition.

In Winter the teacher succeeded in inspiring animation and effort in a class of young men studying book-keeping and carried them forward very handsomely. In the general studies of the school, however, there



was a lack of enthusiasm and progress, and some complaint has been made of want of punctuality, at all times, in the teacher. In the first visit to the school wrote down, "appeared very well." A third and more prolonged visit of examination was intended, but an earlier close of the school than was apprehended took place and prevented.

#### DISTRICT No. 4.

Quite a small school in Summer, but attentively kept by one fully competent to teach. A little more animation in the school would have been desirable. There were classes in Algebra and French for the more advanced scholars.

No notice was given to the committee when the Winter school would close, and only one visit was made in the early part of the term. Reasonable anticipations were in that visit indulged, that the experienced teacher in charge, would render a good account of her stewardship, and such we have heard was the result.

#### DISTRICT No. 5.

In Summer was taught by a teacher who assiduously devoted herself to the work of advancing her pupils in their studies. At the examination in the close of the term, three pieces of handsome drawing were exhibited, executed in the school. The recitations were lively and worthy of praise.

In Winter the school was only visited in the commencement, for a severe snow storm and drift prevented the going when notified of the time of the close. In the visits which were made, nothing appeared to warrant any other expectation than a pleasant and prosperous school.

The objections of a scholar to perform a duty assigned him by the teacher, led to a very injudicious interference on the part of the boy's guardian or employer, who, calling upon the teacher, used language that had the effect to discourage him in his teaching. So the trustee informed a member of the committee. When will persons learn to distrust the representations of pupils to the prejudice of teachers, so often,—if not untrue,—greatly exaggerated? The proper way is to apply to the trustee, and to the school committee, if any accusation is to be brought against a teacher, in order that the matter may be disposed of calmly and with impartial justice, by those appointed by law for this special duty. Good sense, regard to law, and procedure consonant to the true welfare of the complaining scholar, the prosperity of the school, and the station of the teacher, dictate such a course. The master is supposed to know his own business quite as well as mechanics and farmers know theirs, and to resent interference with a like feeling of self-respect and independence.

## DISTRICT No. 6.

The Summer term was ably conducted by a well educated, lively and energetic teacher, but some thought that she delegated too entirely some of the junior classes to her assistant teacher, whose attainments were hardly sufficient for the sole charge of them. The school was quite large, and had poor accommodations for all the recitations. We feel confident that the principal teacher threw her whole soul into the work, and that, with a suitable school-room for the classification of so many scholars, a better result could have been obtained. The school appeared well.

A lady was engaged for the Winter school rather late in the season, and the term was shorter than usual. Some of the scholars were detained at home by parents, so as not too much to crowd the school-room. An assistant teacher was engaged, and the term was as pleasant and profitable as could have been expected. The chief teacher, having had much experience, and possessing some fine qualities for her office, was quite successful in the performance of her duties. The assistant instructor also gave satisfaction.

This district has done a good thing in dividing, and resolving to put up two new, commodious and handsome school-houses, in more eligible situations than the old house, and more convenient of access for the large body of the scholars. The spirit and unanimity in which they have proceeded in this good work, is worthy of all praise, and though perfect harmony has not marked all the steps in the movement, yet a very general agreement has existed, and all parties will no doubt finally acquiesce in the very judicious and prospectively beneficial measures adopted. The old district has voted eight hundred, and the other, we believe, intends to appropriate one thousand dollars for their new houses, and they intend to have the grounds around them tasteful and convenient, and all the modern improvements in the external structure and the internal fittings of the houses. We predict a new impulse to the cause of education, and a go ahead in the old district, No. 6, and the new one, No. 19.

The factory now building there will bring more scholars and money to aid in the improved change, and property, social reform, and religion, will feel the benefit of their operations.

## DISTRICT No. 7.

In Summer was taught by one who was successful in winning the affections of the scholars, and imparting to them a knowledge of their studies.

The Winter session of this school was also well attended to by the teacher in charge, who devoted herself to her work.

## DISTRICT No. 8.

A young teacher succeeded well in the Summer period. In the Winter the government was good, and the reading and speaking excellent.

## DISTRICT No. 9.

This district put up, in 1847, the very best school-house in the town, at an expense of \$1,750. The rooms are divided by sliding doors, so that the primary department and the higher school can be brought together or separated, as convenience may demand. The rooms are admirably fitted up, and the building, in a retired place, in a beautiful grove, is sheltered from the wind, and forms a beautiful contrast to the exposed and distasteful aspect of many school-houses. Teachers and scholars must feel the refining, grateful and studious influences of such a school in such a situation.

A private school was taught in the summer. The winter school in the chief department lost the valuable services of Mr. Hall, the former teacher, but his place was pretty well supplied by an experienced instructor who was faithful to the important interests intrusted to him. Owing to the smallness of the higher department, the advanced standing of the stock of instruction was not so conspicuous as on some former occasions.

The primary division, quite numerous and animated, under the charge of a benevolent and active teacher, went through their exercises with great ease and promptness. Nearly thirty of them took part in declamation. The manner of some of them was so easy and confident as to imply :

“ And where’s the boy of three feet high,  
That’s made improvement more than I ? ”

## DISTRICT No. 10.

The summer school appeared well, as having been taught correctly, and watched over with care and intelligence.

In Winter, good government, excellent reading, and progressive generally. An interesting class in Geography was called out, and each scholar separately described and pointed out on the large map three or four States, with great accuracy and minute definition.

## DISTRICT No. 11.

This district in Summer was taught by a young teacher, who, though qualified to teach, was thought to be deficient in strictness of government. The school abruptly closed after a month’s continuance, and we think by a little over-stretch of authority on the part of the trustee.

At least the school committee were not consulted in the matter, and we cannot hear that any suggestions were made to the teacher for her improvement, which her inexperience in teaching would have in all charity commanded. No other teacher was engaged to supply the place vacated in so summary a manner, and the children of the district were deprived of the opportunity of instruction that law and custom gave them. Somebody is to blame for this.

The Winter session was improved for a four months' tuition, and the progress made by the scholars is thought to have been greater than for several previous terms. In reading, the scholars were required to read the lesson until they read it correctly—a practice not observed in all the schools.

A new school-house is imperiously demanded in No. 11, unless the people there desire to be behind the other districts. The old house is not only very inconvenient in its fitting up, but is also very much out of repair. If the District will wake up with laudable pride, and build a new and commodious edifice, it will be better for their children than if they were to vote them a thousand dollars apiece, or leave this amount in their wills.

#### DISTRICT No. 12.

The Summer school was under the care of a young lady of good attainments and amiability, but hardly energy enough to move the inert minds of many of her scholars.

In Winter a teacher of some years experience, and proceeding very systematically in his work, assisted very much in unfolding the minds of his pupils, and storing their minds with knowledge. In reading he was a fine model of what a teacher should be: calm and patient, though wanting perhaps, a little in vigor of administration. His term was a prosperous one.

#### DISTRICT No. 13.

This school, instructed in the warm season by one long engaged in teaching, exhibited improvement; the last half of the term decidedly the best.

In Winter the discipline at first was rather more strict than the scholars had been accustomed to, and created some uneasiness. Teachers have frequently had trouble in this district, and we think there is some local evil that ought to be remedied. Perhaps there is too much disposition to find fault, or to take up with the reports of children. No school can flourish without the warm and friendly co-operation of parents. Teachers are by no means perfect, but they should be judged candidly, and be allowed a fair investigation.

The school appeared sluggish, and the teacher discouraged, in the last visit made. There was evidently not that sympathy and co-operation between the scholars and the teacher so essential to make a good school. Parents should be careful what they say before their children to the prejudice of the teacher, if they would not destroy the master's influence, and hinder the improvement of the scholars. The reading, some of it, was slovenly, but the arithmetic and geography very fair. No school is better prepared with apparatus than this, and the school building is new, finely fitted up, and pleasantly located.

#### DISTRICT No. 14.

In the Summer school this district was highly favored with a teacher, who seemed to love instruction, and to be much at home in a school. The reading and composition were particularly fine, and the most cordial agreement and mutual esteem was manifested between the teacher and the scholars. We understand the teacher taught the Winter term in a school in Massachusetts, and she was well qualified to do it.

The young man who taught in the Winter school was very ambitious to excel, and was very diligent and thorough in his tuition. The order was good.

#### DISTRICT No. 15.

The teacher in the Summer was very conscientious in the discharge of her duties, and possessed a pleasing way of imparting instruction. She kept a good school.

In the Winter a good school was also enjoyed, and much knowledge was acquired by the scholars.

#### DISTRICT No. 16.

The committee must enter their marked protest against the shabby school-house in this district. It is quite time that a new building was put up for the credit of the district, and the prosperity of the school. We do not believe that economy or utility would be found in repairing the old building, though a very thorough repair would be a great improvement. This and No. 11 are at the foot of the ladder in the school houses of the town. Teachers and scholars must be much crippled in their operations in such a school, and the money expended by the State and by the town, for tuition there, cannot produce the benefit intended. The most wealthy men in No. 16, it may be said, have no children to send to the school. Well, then, we will appeal to higher and more disinterested motives, to urge them to come forward on this occasion. The property in the district would be worth as much more, certainly, as the addition of the cost of a new school-house, should one be put up.

The school in the Summer was quite small, but satisfactorily taught by the young lady who was the teacher.

In Winter the school was instructed by an inexperienced instructor, whose government, however, was good, and recitations generally quite interesting, especially that of the classes in algebra.

#### DISTRICT No. 17.

Here we have a first class school-house: high studded, spacious, ventilated and well seated. All honor to this district for their house.

The Summer term was not a very flourishing one, under the care of a young lady who possessed a very mild and pleasant disposition, but was wanting in government.

In the winter the teacher of the preceding year was re-engaged, and kept a good school. The older scholars seemed to occupy more than their proportionate time of the teacher, which indeed was the case in some other schools. We were sorry to see in this school none of Payson & Dunton's penmanship copy books, the introduction of which would have greatly improved the penmanship of the scholars. We think the teacher ought to wear a coat of some kind in the school, as without it he has rather an undignified appearance.

#### DISTRICT No. 18.

This district, though last in the arrangement, is by no means the least in the order of excellence. The gentleman who is now in his second year of instructing this school, has had charge of both the Summer and Winter terms. He is ably supported in his district by men who are determined to have a good school. In industry, energy and perseverance, the teacher has distinguished himself. A very decided progress has been made in all the departments of instruction. Some rivalry between this school and No. 2, has quickened the mind of both schools, and in both, some classes have been worked full hard enough.

There are a few general matters on which we would remark. One of the most important, that of ventilation, seems to have been almost entirely neglected in the construction of our school-houses. A small wooden chimney, costing but very little money, would make the school-rooms much more healthy, both for teachers and scholars, and prevent languor and dullness occasioned by impure air. The new school-houses going up, we learn, will pay particular attention to ventilation, and have high studded rooms.

The want of outline and other maps to hang up in the school-rooms, and also, of globes, to teach and illustrate Geography, is quite a drawback upon instruction in some of the schools. Thermometers are rarely

found, and thus, the teacher has no guide in regulating the heat of the room, which ought to be graduated, so as to secure the comfort, health and activity of mind of the pupils. Bells, also, should be more generally introduced, that the scholars may be assisted in punctuality, so important to the success of a school.

Webster's unabridged dictionary, furnished by the town or the district, to be kept in the teacher's desk, for access to all the scholars, would furnish a very great amount of useful and necessary information to teachers and scholars.

The disposition on the part of many parents to take their children from school to earn money in the factories, in violation of the laws of the State, should be met by a firm adherence to law. These children are defrauded of their dearest rights by those who ought to be the last to take such advantage.

In the apportionment of money to the districts, there ought to be a generous provision made for the smaller districts, whose means are not so great for the support of schools, and yet, whose children require, and should have good instruction. The State, with a view to benefit them, has in its first appropriation required that one-half of the money given be divided equally, without regard to the population of the district, and the other half to be apportioned *pro rata* to the average number of scholars attending upon school. The last year the State voted an additional sum of money to the schools, providing that *all* of it should be divided equally, the smaller districts to share equally with the larger. The town appropriation is made in the same manner, giving to the smallest districts an equal amount to the largest. We think that this is carrying the indulgence too far, and that it is manifestly partial and unjust, and would therefore recommend that the town's money be given in proportion to the average scholars of each district, which will leave then to the smallest districts, all the indulgence and advantage that could with equity be demanded. To show how unequally and injurious the present system works, we have only to point to district No. 2, as paying a rate or trustee bill the last year, of \$195 42, and No. 18 expending \$180, while the smaller districts not only do not tax their inhabitants, but, in many cases, have a surplus left from the State and town appropriations: instance No. 5, which has \$80 left untouched, and No. 3, \$70.

It is to be regretted that so few of the schools have fences around their grounds, and that so little pains has been taken to adorn and make pleasing, by the planting of trees and shrubbery, the school lands. We hope that the friends of the public school system will rally, in view of these suggestions, and see to it, that every thing proper and demanded by the spirit of modern improvement, shall be found in connection with our schools. Let these nurseries of learning, adding to wealth and

respectability, tending so much to improve social life and advance national renown, have the sympathy, prayers and hearty co-operation of all our citizens.

Our popular institutions are favorable to intellectual improvement. As has been eloquently said by one of the first orators and statesmen : " they encourage nature to perfect her work ; they make education the soul's nutriment, cheap ; they bring up remote and shrinking talent into the cheerful field of competition ; in a thousand ways they provide an audience for lips which nature has touched with persuasion ; they put a lyre into the hands of genius ; they bestow on all who desire or seek it, the only patronage that ever struck out a spark of celestial fire,—the patronage of fair opportunity."

What powerful motives urge us, then, to sustain our common schools ! " Give the people an object in promoting education, and the worn hand of labor will open to the last farthing, that its children may enjoy means denied to itself."

Respectfully submitted, by

C. C. BEAMAN,  
RICHARD SMITH,  
GEO. W. COLWELL,  
*School Committee.*



The following table shows the number of scholars registered, and the average attendance in each district, for the year ending May 1, 1854. Also, the division of public school money to each district, for the school year ending May 1, 1855.

No. of Dis.	Scholars.		Division Average	State Appropriation		Town Tax.	Registry Tax.	Amount.
	Reg-ister'd	Average Attendance.		Equal	New allowance.			
1	37	26 1-2	24 29	28 52	39 26	48 88	11 47	152 42
2	68	62 1-4	57 06	28 52	39 26	48 89	11 47	185 20
3	40	28	25 67	28 52	39 25	48 89	11 47	153 81
4	19	18 1-4	16 73	28 52	39 26	48 89	11 47	144 87
5	23	14 1-4	13 06	28 52	39 26	48 89	11 47	141 20
6	100	67	61 42	28 52	39 26	48 89	11 47	189 56
7	17	10 1-4	19 40	28 53	39 26	48 89	11 46	137 53
8	32	16	14 67	28 52	39 26	48 89	11 46	142 80
9	87	60	55 00	28 52	39 26	48 89	11 46	183 13
10	31	21 1-2	19 71	28 52	39 26	48 89	11 46	147 84
11	23	17 1-2	16 04	28 52	39 26	48 89	11 46	144 17
12	71	40	36 67	28 52	39 26	48 89	11 46	164 80
13	60	27 1-2	25 21	28 52	39 26	48 89	11 46	153 34
14	40	27 1-4	24 99	28 52	39 26	48 89	11 46	152 12
15	32	20	18 34	28 52	39 26	48 89	11 46	146 37
16	26	17 1-4	15 81	28 52	39 26	48 89	11 46	143 94
17	33	25 1-2	23 38	28 52	39 26	48 89	11 46	151 51
18	78	61	55 92	28 52	39 26	48 89	11 46	184 06
19							11 46	11 46
807		563	513 37	513 37	706 68	*880 00	217 80	2831 22

\* Reserved for printing Report, §20.

## APPENDIX.

## TEACHERS IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

SUMMER TERM.				WINTER TERM.			
District.	Names of Teachers.	Residence.	Length of term.	Names of Teachers.	Residence.	Length of Term.	
1	Caroline P. Hopkins,	Setuate, R. I.	6	Simeon L. Cook,	Woonsocket, R. I.	4	
2	William S. Kent,	Johnston, R. I.	4	William S. Kent,	Johnston, R. I.	4	
3	Mary A. Harris,	Setuate, R. I.	4	Mary A. Harris,	"	4	
4	Mary M. Tourtelot,	"	4	Cranie T. Harris,	"	4	
5	Nancy C. Harris,	"	6	Arnold F. Lapham,	"	4	
6	E. C. Wilbur,	"	4	Abby F. Allen,	"	3	
7	Eliza M. Field,	"	4	Henry J. Snell,	Lowell, Mass.	3	
8	Ann Maria Hierlby,	"	3	Hannah W. Smith,	Setuate, R. I.	5	
9	*	"	4	Albert Olney,	"	4	
10	Rachel Vaughn,	Coventry, R. I.	5	Ann E. Chamberlain,	"	4	
11	Cordelia E. Paine,	Woonsocket, R. I.	6	Chas. F. Carpenter,	Coventry, R. I.	4	
12	Martina E. Quimby,	Sandwich, N. H.	1	John C. Colvin,	Setuate, R. I.	4	
13	Ann E. Chamberlain,	Setuate, R. I.	4	Ann Maria Hierlby,	"	4	
14	Maria Essex,	Providence, R. I.	6	George A. Colvin,	"	4	
15	Chloe A. Winsor,	Johnston, R. I.	5	Wm. S. Steere,	"	4	
16	Karab R. Angell,	Setuate, R. I.	4	Lucian B. Webster,	Woodstock, Conn.	5	
17	H. A. Kippen,	"	6	Rae J. Sweet,	Gloicester, R. I.	4	
18	John L. Hammett,	Coventry, R. I.	3	C. Walker,	Setuate, R. I.	4	
				T. C. Bradford,	Cranston, R. I.	4	
				John H. Kegan,	Griswold, Conn.	6	
				John L. Hammett,	Coventry, R. I.	6	

\* Private School.

The following table gives the whole amount of public money expended in each School District for the school year ending May 1, 1855. together with the amount remaining in the treasury due each district.

No.	Local Name.	Summer School.	Winter School.	Total Sum. and Win.	Remaining in the Treasury.
1	Rocky Hill,	55	96	151	19 81
2	North Scituate.	*	173	173	12 20
3	Eagle,	40	80	120	70 29
4	Academy,	48	56	104	40 87
5	Chopmist,	50	51	101	81 64
6	Rockland,	68	107	175	35 62
7	Potter,	42	80	122	53 34
8	Burnt Hill,	48	80	128	36 44
9	Hopeville,	*	189	189	15 19
10	Kent,	52	96	148	27
11	Barnes,	18 60	80	98 60	64 76
12	Saundersville,	35	100	135	20 80
13	South Scituate,	55	90	145	29 40
14	Richmond,	72	80	152	38 79
15	Trimtown,	50	74 75	124 75	26 80
16	Westcott.	40	68	108	56 99
17	Clayville,	33	100	133	63 29
18	Glenford,	50	184 05	234 05	0 00
19	Bettyville,				11 46
		756 60	1784 80	2541 40	680 96

\*Private Schools.

The following table gives the number of families and their pursuits; the number of voters and landholders, the inhabitants, and the taxable property in the town.

No. of District.	No. of Families.	Agricultural Families.	Factory Families.	Other Pursuits.	No. of Voters.	Landholders.	Inhabitants.			Taxable Property.
							All ages.	Under 16 years.	Between 16 & 65.	
1	43	12		3	40	14	213	68	44	60 000
2	96	23	30	16	95	40	500	110	75	156 800
3	24	24		7	30	22	130	45	30	42 000
4	18	17			22	15	98	26	22	37 800
5	21	21			22	18	98	36	24	40 000
6	39	12		5	38	26	196	63	45	48 900
7	26	23		6	29	23	103	28	17	37 000
8	15	15	94		15	14	81	28	20	46 000
9	138	13		10	70	30	625	256	147	210 000
10	14	14			22	15	75	32	20	67 000
11	20	20	23		25	20	71	17	15	25 000
12	52	20		1	40	22	220	80	65	78 000
13	45	33		1	33	18	260	90	45	86 200
14	30	10		9	43	24	177	55	37	80 000
15	31	31			35	17	129	64	30	36 800
16	16	16			22	20	56	25	15	50 000
17	45	12		4	21	21	270	80	70	50 000
18	54	9		9	60	20	299	100	69	102 500
727	325	147		71	660	79	3601	1193	790	1253 100

\*Partial Report.

## CRANSTON—NO REPORT.

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# ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE OF THE Town of Johnston.

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*To the Town of Johnston—the School Committee of the Town of Johnston respectfully Report.*

That the amount of money received into the treasury for Public School purposes the last year, was nineteen hundred and twenty-five, and 89-100 dollars, from the following sources, viz :

From the State,	-	-	-	-	\$1,262 89
“ “ Town,	-	-	-	-	500 00
“ Registry taxes,	-	-	-	-	163 00
Making the total of					\$1,925 89

Which was apportioned among the several school districts of the town in the following ratio—all the money received from the State was divided according to law, viz : one-half equally among all the school districts, and the other half in proportion to the average daily attendance of the scholars.

The money received from the town and for registry taxes was divided as follows, viz : two-thirds equally among all the schools. and one-third

in proportion to the average daily attendance of the scholars, which ratio gave the 13 school districts the following amounts, viz :

District No. 1—Primary School,	-	-	-	\$182 89
" 1—Grammar School,	-	-	-	187 66
" 2,	-	-	-	146 43
" 3,	-	-	-	152 72
" 1,	-	-	-	135 74
" 5,	-	-	-	110 51
" 6,	-	-	-	115 02
" 7,	-	-	-	125 06
" 8,	-	-	-	120 04
" 9,	-	-	-	120 66
" 10,	-	-	-	116 26
" 11,	-	-	-	126 32
" 12,	-	-	-	151 46
" 13,	-	-	-	135 12
Total,	-	-	-	\$1,925 89

There has been expended during the past year for the support of Public Schools; so far as has come to the knowledge of your Committee, the sum of \$2,019 20, part of which was raised by tuition and other taxes, there is an unexpended balance of \$236 06, in favor of school districts Nos. 4, 5, 6, 8, 11 and 13, in different sums.

The schools have all been examined by some member or members of the School Committee, as required by law, and have been found generally in a good condition. Seven male and seven female teachers have been employed during the past winter, at an average salary of \$25 per month, inclusive of board. The sessions have been from four to six months during the time, and the scholars have shown good signs of improvement.

Your Committee would further suggest that a sum not less than \$500 be appropriated for the support of the Public Schools the ensuing year.

Respectfully submitted by

ROBERT WILSON,	} School Committee.
JOSEPH BAILEY,	
WILLIAM RICHARDSON,	
ISAAC W. D. PIKE,	

R E P O R T  
OF THE  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
OF THE  
TOWN OF GLOCESTER.

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The town of Gloucester, at the last annual election of town officers, elected a Superintendent of Public Schools, by virtue of the 7th Section of the School Act, and voted the sum of fifty dollars to be paid to him as a compensation for his services; the Superintendent to do and perform such duties, and to exercise such powers, as the School Committee of said town may assign to him.

The Committee afterwards voted:—

“That the powers and duties delegated to them by the Act in relation to Public Schools, be and the same is hereby assigned to the Superintendent thereof, and that he be required to report to the Committee his acts and doings; Provided, however, that the Superintendent shall be required to notify the Committee whenever an occasion shall occur for the exercise of the powers prescribed in sections twelfth, thirteenth and thirty-first of said act, the powers therein contained not being delegated to the Superintendent.”

The Committee, therefore, beg leave to present herewith the Report of the Superintendent as made to them.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT.

In returning to the Committee a Report of my doings as Superintendent of Public Schools, I will endeavor to be as brief as the subject will

admit, proposing *only* to submit for your consideration a statement of the financial affairs of school appropriations of the town, the condition of the schools in general, and all other facts that may be deemed pertinent to the subject, or which may be thought interesting or beneficial to those interested in the education of the young.

I do not propose to encumber these few pages with wild, theoretical views, unsound and impracticable, that too often encumber communications of this kind, and which have been heretofore carried to such an extent by visionary writers, that the cause of education, like other great moral causes, has reached its acme; and now that the delusion is dispelled, the excitement ended, will retrograde as fast as it formerly progressed.

The results of the present system of Common School education in this country—now in its incipient stages—have yet to be ascertained, *ere* it will be conceded that it excels the old system, which ordained that the rod and ferule should have a commanding influence in the school-room, and that the stern will of the parent should be the law outside.

Could the authors and friends of the modern system be assured that it contains elements similar to those of the old, that entered into and formed the character of the founders of the Republic, they would have the consolation of knowing that the future rulers of America would have strong claims to the patriotism, virtue and firmness of purpose, which so eminently distinguished them.

It should be the aim of those in whose hands the improvement and education of the young are entrusted, to provide for them a sound, healthy, vigorous and common sense education, and not to instil into their minds a few vague ideas of what they ought to know, or vitiate their tastes by compelling them to pursue a course of study beyond their infantile powers of comprehension, or indulge them in effeminate habits, which may result in a life of imbecility, misery and ruin.

I have to report that during my administration as Superintendent, I have endeavored to discharge the duties of the office as faithfully and as promptly as the circumstances required. Much time has been consumed in the performance of those duties, and some expenses incurred which the salary is insufficient to afford a fair compensation and defray.

All of the schools have been visited during the past year, some in the winter term and others in the summer.

There are fifteen and a half districts in the town, and a half day has been passed in each, when visited; the town being so large and the districts so scattered, the visits have been attended at an expense of fifteen to twenty dollars, exclusive of the time. The visitation of the schools is no easy task to perform, yet the Superintendent has endeav-



ored to discharge this duty without too great a sacrifice of time and money.

A record of each day's proceeding has been kept, from which a few facts are here inserted, showing the situation of the schools, the condition of the school-houses, &c., viz:

*June 27th, 1854.*—Visited the school in District No. 8, Shady Oak; found the scholars and teacher were doing well, and seemingly contented; but the school-house is a miserable old shanty-like building, worn out and fast falling to decay—a proper subject of condemnation by the School Committee of the town. The whole number of scholars in attendance, 22—among them some fine scholars; they deserve a better place of learning and better school conveniences than they enjoy at the present.

*June 29th, 1854.*—Was present at the examination of the Grammar School, Chepachet. The exercises were interesting and highly satisfactory. A number of parents and others interested were present, among whom were the clergy of the village, the officers of the district, and members of the School Committee. The presence of visitors adds much to the interest of examination day, and is a practice that should not be overlooked by parents and others.

*June 30th, 1854.*—Visited the school in District No. 13, Laurel Green. The pupils seemed contented and happy, and had every appearance of learning well. The beautiful and innocent exercise of singing, the recital of the Ten Commandments in concert, were among the interesting exercises of this school.

*September 1st, 1854.*—Visited the Primary and Intermediate schools in Chepachet, and left some rules to be observed in relation to the transfer of scholars from school to school, and in relation to the use of books.

*September 26th.*—Visited school District No. 2, Evan's District. This district being disorganized by reason of the school officers resigning their trust, and the failure of the district to elect new officers, the Superintendent ordered a school by virtue of the 38th Section of the act in relation to Public Schools, which recites that, "If any School District shall neglect to organize, the School Committee of the town may themselves, or by an agent, establish a school in the district school-house, or elsewhere in their discretion, and employ a teacher."

Accordingly, a school was opened in the building formerly used for school purposes, and continued for three months, but the teacher leaving, another was procured, and the school continued on in an old dwelling house in a different part of the district. The dissensions in this district have been carried to such an extent, and have been of so long a standing, that the inhabitants thereof seem determined to come to no agreement whatever in relation to the erection of a new and substantial

school-house. The only remedy that presents itself for that district, is to divide it into two separate and distinct districts ; but this seems impracticable, as there are not to exceed thirty scholars in the whole district, and this small number attending two schools would render the experiment abortive—or perhaps a better method to remedy the evil might be adopted, and that is to set off those families who live near to other towns and districts, and thereby lessen the number who would send. This could be done with a very little trouble provided it did not discommode those families too much.

Harmony, or school District No. 1, has, during the past year, erected a very neat, convenient and commodious school-house, at a cost of about \$800, and it was opened for school purposes in December last. Much credit is due to the inhabitants of this district for the very energetic and successful manner they have displayed in the accomplishment of their undertaking. After repeated attempts and as many failures, they have the satisfaction of owning and enjoying as good a school-house as any in the town.

It was the intention of the Superintendent to have visited this school at the close of its last winter term, but omitting to do so, he is unable to speak definitely of the standing and proficiency of the pupils. The remaining eight schools, with one exception, have been visited from time to time, and all of them gave evidence of being well conducted and seemingly in prosperous condition.

District No. 14 or 1-2 District (as it is called) is made up from another district in Foster. The whole number of families belonging to that half lying in Gloucester who send children to this joint school, is only three, and the daily average of scholars but four from these families. The whole amount of money appropriated to this half district by the town of Gloucester the past year was \$40 48, a sum manifestly too large and disproportionate to the other districts, yet no more than they are entitled to receive under the law.

In the same neighborhood are four families who also send their children into an adjoining district in Foster, and whose average daily attendance during the summer term was eight ; yet they draw, under the name of Gross and Wade, the sum of eleven dollars and fifty-one cents, according to their average attendance, while the former, from the fact of its being a half district, draws a half district's appropriation in addition to its average attendance. At a meeting of the School Committee, January 11th, A. D. 1853, it was voted that "Anthony Place and thirteen others, and their successors upon the estates by them respectively occupied, and all the lands and taxable property included in certain bounds therein mentioned, (being part of school district in said Gloucester, usually known and called Half District, No. 14,) be, and the same

is united to School District No. 13, in said Foster, so as to constitute a joint district therewith, and that the persons above named, &c., be allowed to draw out of the Public School money of said Gloucester, the same proportion of Public School money as they have heretofore done." This arrangement has existed for one or two years; the first year the largest average attendance was but five, and the last year only four during the winter term, when schools are usually more fully attended.

Some action ought to be taken to prevent so large a sum of money from being drawn from the public funds to educate so small a number of pupils. A tuition tax is unnecessary to be made, for all expenses are publicly defrayed.

I regret to be under the necessity to report that the inhabitants of District No. 7, Clarksville, and of No. 15, Victory, have manifested much indifference and apathy in school matters by refusing to assemble in annual meeting for the choice of officers, when legally notified by the Trustees to do so. Moderators, Clerks, Treasurers, and all district officers have refused to be present when meetings have been called by the proper officer. Such omission on the part of those who are relied upon to carry out the school system is to be regretted, and cannot fail to meet the disapproval of every good citizen and friend of education.

It is in such a contingency that the law has wisely provided, "That any officer who shall willfully or knowingly refuse to perform any duty of his office, may be indicted therefor, and, on conviction, fined not exceeding five hundred dollars, or be imprisoned not exceeding six months, and shall besides be liable to a suit for damages by any person injured thereby." Perhaps a strict and thorough enforcement of this law in a few cases would remedy similar and future omission.

The whole number of teachers who have been examined during the past year, was fourteen—ten females and four males, all of whom, with one exception, received a certificate of qualification. A majority of the candidates were persons who were selected mostly for their known ability, and in the discharge of their important and difficult task, generally gave satisfaction.

The average compensation per month paid to teachers during their respective terms, was about eighteen dollars to females and about thirty to males, including estimated value of board. In some of the districts Trustees have drawn from the school fund the necessary amount to defray the expenses of the teachers' board. This practice, it is respectfully suggested, ought not to be allowed, and each district should distinctly understand, that, legally, they are not entitled to receive any money from the treasury except for the payment of teachers' wages, and that the teachers should distinctly understand, when hired, that they are to board round; or that they are to board in one place, and

their board bill to be paid by a tuition tax, to be levied on the parents and others who send to the school. Drawing the funds for other purposes than the wages of teachers has a tendency to defeat the object of the State and Town Appropriations.

The additional sum of about \$600 apportioned to this town by the State, and divided among the fifteen districts of the town, has enabled all the districts to furnish their scholars with (upon an average) eight months' schooling during the year ending May 1st, 1855.

While this munificence on the part of the State was designed to assist each school district in the State, it has had the effect in some districts in this town, to create the belief that all effort on the part of the district to sustain their schools was unnecessary, as the State, by its appropriations, had relieved them of all responsibility. This is an error which should be corrected.

It is incumbent upon the inhabitants of every district to contribute towards the support and maintenance of their school, to keep up and manifest a constant, lively interest in its welfare and success, and to suppose that because the State and town are generous enough to furnish funds, they are likewise bound to manage the minor affairs of the several districts.

The actual cost of all the schools during the past year is \$2,707 31; this includes the amount of State and town appropriations, and \$692 94, the amount raised by a tuition tax or rate bill, and \$414 35, the estimated amount for board in districts where the teacher boarded round.

The whole amount of available funds received into the treasury for the past year was \$1,670 73; of this sum all has been drawn out for school purposes, with the exception of the amount reserved for incidental expenses, and the amount of the Superintendent's salary.

The following tables will exhibit the receipts and expenditures for school purposes during the year, the amount expended in each district, in each school, and for each scholar, &c.

## RECEIPTS AND ESTIMATES FOR THE YEAR 1854-'55.

Balance from last year,	-	-	-	\$31 82
Received from State Treasurer,	-	-	-	1212 70
“ “ Registry tax,	-	-	-	226 21
Appropriated by the town,	-	-	-	200 00
Amount raised by tuition tax,	-	-	-	692 94
Estimated board.	-	-	-	414 35
Amount,	-	-	-	\$2778 02

## EXPENDITURES.

Teachers' salaries,	-	-	-	\$1600 02
Salary of Superintendent,	-	-	-	50 00
Incidental Expenses,	-	-	-	15 00
Balance in treasury unexpended,	-	-	-	5 71
Raised and expended by tuition tax,	-	-	-	692 94
Estimated board,	-	-	-	414 35
Amount,	-	-	-	\$2778 02

No. of Dist.	Local Name.	Public Money.	Raised by Tuition Tax.	Estimated Board.	Total Cost.	Unexpended
1	Harmony.	\$89 05			\$89 05	
2	Evans.	97 13			97 12	
3 to 5	Consolidated.	422 69	\$485 16		907 85	
6	Pine Orchard.	105 00		72 00	177 00	21
7	Clarkville.	101 17		62 00	163 77	
8	Shady Oak.	89 05	18 00	40 00	147 05	
9	Washington.	118 35	15 65	112 35	246 35	1 00
10	Valley.	109 23	10 00	72 00	191 23	02
11	Brown.	105 21		24 00	129 21	
12	Central.	121 37	64 00		185 57	
13	Laurel Green.	105 00	41 00	32 00	178 00	4 25
14	Mt. Hygea.	40 26			40 26	22
15	Victoria.	85 01	54 96		139 97	01
—	Gross & Wade	11 51	4 17		15 68	
		\$1600 02	\$692 94	\$414 35	\$2707 31	5 71

TABLE No. 2.—Showing the number of Scholars, Attendance, &amp;c. through the year.

No. of District.	Local Name.	FIRST TERM				SECOND TERM.					
		Male.	Female.	Total.	Average.	Length of schooling in mos.	Male.	Female.	Total.	Average.	Length of schooling in mos.
1	Harmony.	10	9	19	10	4 1-2	19	8	27	13	3 3-4
2	Evans.	10	7	17	11	3	17	10	27	17	2
3	Grammar.	22	21	43	32	3	28	22	50	42	3
4	Intermediate.	19	28	47	40	3	28	21	44	37	3
5	Primary.	22	21	43	37	3	24	15	39	26	3
6	Pine Orchard.	6	17	23	16	4	17	17	34	22	5
7	Clarkville.	17	21	38	20	4	20	10	30	20	3 1-4
8	Shady Oak.	7	17	24	16	3	10	15	25	13	3
9	Washington.	13	19	32	25	6	25	15	30	27	4
10	Valley.	14	10	24	17	4	22	10	32	27	4
11	Brown.	11	13	24	16	3	21	12	33	22	4
12	Central.	16	21	37	29	4	28	21	49	37	4
13	Laurel Green.	15	10	25	18	4	24	10	34	21	4
14	Mt. Hygiea.	2	6	8	5	4 1-2	3	4	7	4	5 1-2
15	Victoria.	8	11	19	10	5	11	8	19	11	5
—	Gross & Wade.	1	7	8	6	4	6	5	10	8	4
		193	238	431	308	62	300	203	503	352	60 1-4

In closing this Report, I take the opportunity to tender to the town of Gloucester, through its Committee, my resignation of the office of Superintendent of Public Schools, and as a member of the School Committee; intending at the close of the year of service to withdraw from the office. Believing that some individual more interested in the education of the young, and who will give better satisfaction, will be elected to the office thus vacated.

CHARLES J. RANDALL, *Superintendent.*

All of which is respectfully submitted by the School Committee of Gloucester.

GRIDLEY BURNHAM, *Chairman.*

# ANNUAL REPORT

## OF THE

### SCHOOL COMMITTEE OF FOSTER.

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*The School Committee of Foster respectfully Report to the Annual Town Meeting as follows.*

The whole sum available for the support of Public Schools for the year 1854—5, was

Balance in the town treasury,	-	-	\$188 94
Received from State and other sources,	-	-	1465 41
<hr/>			
Total,	-	-	\$1654 35
Divided among 19 Districts,	-	.	\$1358 56
Balance remaining in town treasury,	-	-	295 79
<hr/>			
Total,	-	-	\$1654 35

It is thought that the schools of the town are gradually improving, though there is great opportunity for still further improvement. Some of the teachers of the Public Schools the past year have been excellent, and others, of course, inferior.

Fourteen of the nineteen districts maintained summer schools, and but one a winter school. No district kept a school less than four months. (No. 9 should be excepted, which kept no school.) Three districts kept schools 5 1-2 months; three 7 months; five 8 months; three 9 months.

Eleven of the schools had male teachers in the winter, the other seven female, and all of the fourteen in summer had females.

Respectfully submitted,

MOWRY P. ARNOLD,

*Chairman of the School Committee.*

## BURRILLVILLE NO REPORT.

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# REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF THE CITY OF NEWPORT.

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*The Committee on Public Schools, on closing the present fiscal year, respectfully submit the following Report :*

In the last week of April, 1855,—being the concluding week of the fiscal year,—the number of pupils in the Public Schools of the City of Newport, was 873.

This number is distributed among 17 schools, taught by 22 teachers, as follows :

1 High School for boys : Principal, Mr. Peaslee; Assistants, Miss Jones, Miss Adams, - - - - -	74
1 High School for girls : Principal, Miss Wilbour; Assistant, Miss Newton, - - - - -	77
1 Grammar School for boys, with intermediate department : Prin- cipal, Mr. Clarke; Assistant, Miss Almy, - - -	83
1 Grammar School for girls, with intermediate department : Prin- cipal, Miss Newton; Assistant, Miss Goodspeed, - - -	89
1 Grammar School for boys : Mr. Cook, - - - - -	54



1	Grammar School for girls :	Miss Dennis,	-	-	-	-	48
1	Intermediate for boys :	Miss Gorton,	-	-	-	-	35
1	Intermediate for girls :	Miss Goffe,	-	-	-	-	47
1	Primary :	Miss Chase,	-	-	-	-	58
1	do	Miss Irwin,	-	-	-	-	54
1	do	Miss Hammett,	-	-	-	-	43
1	do	Miss Cotton,	-	-	-	-	42
1	do	Miss Thurston,	-	-	-	-	39
1	do	Miss H. Gorton,	-	-	-	-	38
1	do	Miss Martin,	-	-	-	-	36
1	Grammar and intermediate for colored children :	Miss Gavott,	-	-	-	-	20
1	Primary for colored children :	Miss Benson.	-	-	-	-	36

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873

## EXPENDITURE.

Deficit of last year,	-	-	-	-	-	\$1,184 65
Salaries,	-	-	-	-	-	5,924 14
Rent,	-	-	-	-	-	317 25
Sweeping,	-	-	-	-	-	203 49
Fire-making,	-	-	-	-	-	109 75
Fuel,	-	-	-	-	-	370 65
Repairs,	-	-	-	-	-	574 64
Furniture, including stoves,	-	-	-	-	-	303 64
Stationery,	-	-	-	-	-	560 15
Annual cleaning,	-	-	-	-	-	53 21
Printing,	-	-	-	-	-	7 50
Incidental Expenses,	-	-	-	-	-	17 51
Cash on hand,	-	-	-	-	-	102 70
						<hr/> \$9,729 28

## RECEIPTS.

From State appropriation,	-	-	-	-	\$2,318 53
City do	-	-	-	-	6,500 00
Registry tax,	-	-	-	-	285 00
Stationery tax,	-	-	-	-	625 75
					<hr/>
					\$9,729 28
Outstanding claims,	-	-	-	-	\$798 98
Cash in hand,	-	-	-	-	102.70
					<hr/>
Deficit,	-	-	-	-	\$696 28

From the above tables it will be seen, that the average number of pupils to every teacher, is about forty, while several teachers have each over fifty. Miss Chase, primary teacher, has fifty-eight, and others are waiting for admission. Mr. Clarke, with one assistant, has eighty-three, as many as his seats will hold, and applicants are watching for vacancies. Mr. Cook has fifty-four; Miss Dennis forty-eight; Miss Goffe forty-seven, and Miss Irwin fifty-four.

Forty pupils under one teacher, are too many for efficient instruction, and too many for what is even more important, moral discipline. To accomplish in a manner suitable to the present wants of our American community, the high purposes of free schools for all its children, there should be at least one instructor for every thirty pupils. It must be noted, too, that the number of scholars at the end of April, is much less than in the autumn and winter. Throughout the year, the average number of pupils to each teacher, will be nearer fifty than forty. Moreover the Catholic children are dropping back into our schools, the more enlightened of the Irish population soon perceiving the great superiority of the tuition obtained in them to that given in the private schools, under the direction of their priest.

Our city has urgent need of more teachers, and, also, of more school-rooms.

The Committee would again call attention to a subject which was prominent in the report of the School Committee of the last year, viz: the salaries of the teachers. Considering the importance of the service rendered by free-school teachers, and the increased price in all the necessaries of life, these are, in most cases, inadequate. Good teachers are not mere intellectual hirelings, to hear lessons in grammar and arithmetic. When they are such, they are not up to their vocation, not fit for their place, and should be displaced. Teachers are the interested, sympathizing cultivators of the whole being of their pupils. To them, their school is a dependent family; they are second parents to their scholars. Wherever there is a good school, there is a good teacher, and to make a good school, which is the best thing a community can show, is to establish a paramount claim for liberal compensation.

The Committee are impressed with the duty—for such they deem it to be—of introducing an effectual mode of ventilation, into every school-room. At present, in every one of them the health of teachers and scholars suffers daily; and this diminution of bodily vitality, caused by foul air, is invariably attended by a diminution of mental activity, and a correspondent languor of intellectual action in the school-room, both in pupils and teachers. The Mayor and City Council are earnestly besought to provide means for a thorough ventilation in all the school-rooms.

In the organization of the Male High School, the Committee have made a change which they believe will be in all respects an improvement. For one male assistant, as heretofore, they have substituted two female assistants. On the resignation of Mr. Sturtivant, as Principal of that school, they appointed his assistant, Mr. Peaslee, Principal, and in Mr. Peaslee's place, Miss Jones and Miss Adams, two young ladies who have been educated for the vocation in the Normal School, at Providence, and who, the Committee have cause to think, will entirely fulfil their expectations, and demonstrate the high usefulness of the State Normal School, lately established.

In order to make this change, it was necessary to make one in the building, by taking off from the large room two small ones, for recitation rooms. This alteration, by diminishing the size of the large room, improves it in several respects, bringing the black-boards nearer to the teacher, and making the voices of the teacher and pupil much more distinctly audible than they were before. The room is still amply large for seating as before, 100 scholars.

Into this school, as well as into the female High School, French has been introduced, taught by a highly educated, competent native of France, Mr. Levilloux. The Committee are of the opinion that the addition of the study of French, meets a healthy want in our community, and elevates the character of our two High Schools.

In conclusion, the Committee report a measure they have adopted, whereby they hope better to attain the end of discipline and higher moral culture; this is the abolition of corporal punishment in the Grammar and High Schools.

Education as an Art, has grown rapidly in latter years. In our country it has within a quarter of a century been much developed, through improved methods of imparting knowledge; and more still through the deeper insight gained into the nature of the means of influence over the young. The immeasurably greater efficacy of other means than fear and force, is now almost universally appreciated. It has been at last discovered, that flogging is not a Christian discipline; and teachers find that their calling is elevated, its practice more easy and satisfactory, and their relation to pupils more healthy and true, in proportion as they treat them as self-directing responsible beings. The deep moral nature of the young is far more recognized in the school-room than it was in the last generation. The sublime precept of the Latin Poet,—“To the child is due the highest reverence.”\*—is acknowledged as a precept of truly Christian beauty and profundity.

Considering the wants indicated in the above Report, the Committee

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\*Maxima debetur puero reverentia.

are of opinion, that, in addition to other resources, an appropriation by the city, of ten thousand dollars, will be needed for school purposes, and that the judicious expenditure of this sum, will result in an improvement of the most important interest over which the public authorities have control.

By order of the Board.

D. M. COGGESHALL, *Clerk.*

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PORTSMOUTH NO REPORT.

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MIDDLETOWN NO REPORT.

R E P O R T  
OF THE  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
OF THE  
TOWN OF TIVERTON.

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In compliance with the act relating to Public Schools, the School Committee of the town of Tiverton submit the following as their Annual Report.

On the 8th day of June, 1854, the Committee met and were qualified by taking the oath required by law, and immediately organized by the choice of William G. Borden for Chairman, and D. Andrews for Secretary.

The duty of visitation of schools was divided as follows :—To the Chairman, Districts No. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13; to the Secretary, Districts No. 1, 2, 3, 4, 14, 15, 16 and 17.

The school law makes it the duty of the Trustees to notify the Committee of the time of opening and closing the schools in the several Districts. It also makes it the duty of the Committee to visit by one or more of their number, each school once within two weeks of its opening, and within two weeks of its closing. But owing to the general neglect of the Trustees to perform their duty, several instances have occurred in which the Committee have failed to visit the school within said times, and several instances have also occurred in which they have found a school in operation without any previous notice, and even without the Teacher having a certificate of qualification. This state of affairs ought not any longer to be suffered to exist. It is impossible for the Committee to do their duty effectually without the co-operation of the Trustees of Districts, and others interested. The Trustees and Teachers should also in future be required to make their

more complete, and less imperfect in many respects, as the Committee have found it to be impossible to digest the returns without making corrections, and travelling a great deal outside of the record.

## SCHOOL MONEY.

amount of school money subject to distribution the past year was	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$3,922 32
amount there was received from State Appropriation,	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$1,969 86
Town Appropriation,	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,500 00
Registry Tax,	-	-	-	-	-	-	217 01
Balance unexpended last year,	-	-	-	-	-	-	235 45
Total							\$3,922 32

On this amount the Committee reserved the sum of \$10, in addition to the balance of \$5 reserved and unexpended last year, for the purpose of completing their report, and apportioned the remaining sum of \$3,912 32 to the Districts, as shown in the following Table:

## APPORTIONMENT OF SCHOOL MONEY FOR 1854.

Districts.	State Money.	Town Money.	Total.
No. 1	111 34	118 28	229 62
2	101 77	82 01	183 78
3	108 33	112 97	221 30
4	99 34	78 72	178 06
5	103 38	84 20	187 58
6	117 63	100 57	218 20
7	230 28	394 72	625 00
8	121 67	102 83	224 50
9	104 24	85 37	189 61
10	102 94	80 63	183 57
11	159 85	140 15	300 00
12	97 36	74 99	172 35
13	99 71	77 24	176 95
14	102 31	82 75	185 06
15	105 96	87 71	193 67
16	111 12	94 73	205 85
17	92 63	69 59	162 22
18		75 00	75 00
			\$3,912 32

There has been paid to the several Districts of the above amount, \$3,770 01, leaving a balance due from the town of \$142 31, in addition to the sum of \$15 reserved for printing.

## EXPENDITURES.

As near as could be ascertained by the Committee, there has been expended in the town during the year for the support of schools, \$4,744 81. Of this amount there was paid for wages of Teachers, \$3,602 96; for Incidental Expenses, including the value of board of Teachers in Districts which board the Teachers round, \$1,141 85. In addition to this, there has been expended in building and repairing school-houses, (including the house and lot in District No. 18,) the sum of \$7,500. The following Table shows the expenditures of each District, the number of scholars registered, the average attendance, and the length of the schools during the year.

Districts.	Paid Teachers.	Incidental Expenses.	Total Expenses.	Expended on School Houses.	Scholars Registered	Average Attendance.	Length of Term in weeks.
1	\$185 54	43 98	229 52		49	31	42
2	173 50	64 91	238 41		38	26	38
3	140 00	81 30	221 30		61	30	44
4	116 00	96 50	212 50		37	25	33.2
5	170 09	65 49	235 58		41	29	22
6	130 00	29 61	159 61		78	42	26
7	1060 00	200 00	1260 00	75 00	300	150	40
8	342 00	42 50	384 50	325 00	104	49	38
9	131 25	58 36	189 61		48	29	30
10	88 00	68 25	156 25		42	25	32
11	150 00	55 37	205 37		128	85	20
12	136 08	38 27	172 35		28	17	36.6
13	140 00	61 50	201 50		40	17	36
14	126 50	84 81	211 31		49	27 1-2	33.2
15	112 00	79 00	191 00		52	23 1-2	36
16	190 00	13 50	203 50	100 00	65	33 1 2	38
17	135 00	45 50	180 50		27	12	38
18	77 00	15 00	92 00	7000 00	56	40	9

By the above Table it appears that the average length of the schools throughout the town was about 34 weeks; the number of scholars registered, 1,239; average attendance, 691 1-2; and that the expenses of keeping the schools was an average of \$3 83 to each scholar registered, or \$6 86 to each scholar in average attendance.

## DISTRICTS.

There have been some changes made during the year, in the lines of several of the Districts, and one new District, (No. 18,) has been formed by taking portions of Nos. 6, 7 and 11. The new District has

already erected one of the best school houses to be found in the vicinity, at an expense of about \$7000. Whether the formation of this district was an act of good policy, the Committee leave for others to determine; they would say, however, that as a general principle, they are opposed to making small Districts, but would rather see them consolidated.

In regard to the condition of the schools, the Committee cannot say that they are as a general thing in such condition as they should be. It cannot be expected that our schools should make much progress, so long as there are such frequent changes of Teachers,—while many Teachers are employed on account of the small compensation which they are willing to receive—many through favoritism, and many others discharged from the mere caprice of the Trustees, or some influential citizen of the District. There are however some good Teachers and good schools. As an example the Committee refer to the Intermediate School in District No. 7, taught by Miss Mary S. Jones, as Principal. This school is deservedly considered the best conducted school of its grade in the town, and finely illustrates the advantage of employing permanent teachers, Miss Jones having occupied her present situation for six years. Other Teachers in the same District, and many others in the town are also deservedly considered well qualified, and will no doubt succeed well if they are employed long enough to establish a discipline, which is absolutely necessary.

In closing their report the Committee would most urgently call the attention of the Districts to the bad condition of several of their school houses. Many are small and badly ventilated, while some have few conveniences, wanting out-houses, &c.

All which is respectfully submitted.

In behalf of the Committee,

WM. G. BORDEN, *Chairman.*

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LITTLE COMPTON NO REPORT.

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NEW SHOREHAM NO REPORT.

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JAMESTOWN—NO REPORT.



**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**OF THE**  
**SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**OF THE**  
*Town of South Kingstown.*

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The members of the Committee of the Public Schools of this town who accepted their appointment and were qualified as the law directs, were Rev. Joel Mann, Thos. P. Wells, Esq., Rev. I. M. Church, Mr. Sam. J. Cross, and Rev. N. A. Reed, the latter having been appointed to fill the vacancy occasioned by the resignation and removal of Rev. Mr. Warner.

At the organization of the committee some embarrassment was experienced in obtaining a member to take the superintendence of the schools and visit them on the terms proposed by the town.

All the members declined that important post of duty ; and the committee adjourned for a month without completing its organization. At the second meeting it was agreed to form two divisions of the town, and appoint a superintendent and assistant superintendent, each to have the same powers in respect to examining and approbating teachers, each to visit the schools in his division, and each to receive the amount of compensation voted by the town for one. The committee were fully authorized by the law of the State to make this additional appropriation as may be seen in Sec. 15, page 8, of " Act relating to Public Schools, " which is in these words—" The Committee may employ some person of, or not of their number, to perform this duty, and to receive such compensation as they may allow, out of the money raised by the town, or as the town may allow out of the town treasury." The Committee are

thus empowered to appoint such person as they please to visit and examine the schools, and to make such compensation as they judge to be equitable and proper.

Mr. Mann was appointed chairman and superintendent, and Mr. Warner assistant superintendent. But in a few months Mr. Warner resigned his pastoral charge and removed from town, and the superintendent has performed the whole duty as in former years.

Very few persons are aware of the amount of time and labor and expense which is necessary for the performance of this duty in a town like this, having 21 school districts, occupying a territory equal to four towns of the average size in the other New England States. The Superintendent therefore deems it advisable to state that he has kept an accurate account of the time expended and necessary for visiting the schools in the winter term just past, and finds that if all are visited as the law directs, twice in each term, the amount of time is over two calendar months. Besides this, there are monthly and special meetings of the committee, and also the examinations of teachers, and many of the schools have two teachers in the two terms of the year; all of which makes an expenditure of time equal to the secular days in two and a half months. The actual expense for the hire of horse and vehicle to perform this visitation as stated above, is ascertained to be about twenty-six dollars. Many of these visits have been made on foot, and sometimes the means of conveyance have been furnished gratuitously by the kindness of friends. This actual expenditure, deducted from the forty-two dollars allowed by the town, leaves sixteen dollars for two and a half months of time and labor.

This statement is made because some persons consider that the compensation for these services is too great, and indeed are opposed to making any compensation. It is the full conviction of this committee, that any person who faithfully performs the duties of superintendent of the schools of this town as the law directs, is justly entitled to more than double the amount which has been given, and this we say in justice to those who may be our successors in office.

Your committee, solicitous for the welfare of the schools and of the youth, deem it important to make some further suggestions.

Disturbances in schools, and difficulties with teachers, have occurred in some instances during the past winter. These may be attributed in a great measure to the unjustifiable interference of parents with the rights and duties of teachers in the government of their schools, and to a want of the proper exercise of parental authority and discipline at home. If these things are to be repeated and persisted in, it requires no prophetic spirit to perceive, that it will be impossible to maintain order and subordination in the schools, and they will become nurseries

of insolence, disorder, rowdiness, and ruffianism. If boys are to be allowed to form conspiracies against their teacher, to insult, provoke, and try him in various ways, to disobey his orders and return insolent answers when required to perform duty or to obey prescribed rules, and to be upheld in this opprobrious conduct by their parents, then are we training up men to be contemners of law and authority, disturbers of the public peace, promoters of anarchy and misrule, pests in society, and sappers of our civil institutions.

It is not yet sufficiently known or considered, that the law of the State does not put the schools under the control of the parents, but under officers publicly appointed and sworn to be faithful. Those officers are the persons to whom difficulties are to be referred, as in the commonwealth crimes and misdemeanors are referred to judicial tribunals. The committee is clothed with all the power that is needful in any case. It can suspend or expel from school any turbulent, disobedient, or immoral scholar; and, when occasion requires it, annul the certificate of the teacher, and put the school under the care of another. It is a misdemeanor, and we hope the town will so regard it, for parents to interfere with the regulations of the schools in a way to prevent the teacher from doing what is necessary to preserve order, and secure the respectful conduct and the studious habits of the scholars. Without these, schools will educate youth for evil rather than for good. Our educational system is designed to teach useful knowledge, propriety of manners, and purity of morals, and every good citizen will be solicitous to have it fulfil that design. The young should be educated to a quick perception, a hearty approval, and a ready adoption of what is morally good, and to an abhorrence of what is evil even in the smallest things.

Manners have an intimate connection with morals; and we should be constantly watchful, lest while the minds of youth are improved, their manners do not become heathenized. The superintendent has endeavored to impress the minds of the young with these important matters at his several visitations.

Most of our schools have been favored with competent and zealous teachers, and the results of their labors have been highly gratifying. The course of instruction has been thorough; and many classes have passed through the text books on mental and written arithmetic, geography and grammar, in a manner deserving high commendation. The free use of black boards, with which all our school houses are furnished, has greatly promoted thoroughness and promptitude in the scholars.

Much time has been lost, much discomfort has been experienced, and the business of the schools has been impeded by the use of green wood. Can it be that people have not yet learned the great superiority of seasoned wood to that which is green, especially for a school? Unless the

fire is made very early, and then often and seasonably replenished, the room is uncomfortable in cold weather, and of course little can be done. We earnestly request the trustees to attend to this matter, and secure a sufficient quantity of seasoned wood for the whole term. The embarrassment to teachers in watching the fire and in efforts to rekindle it when low, and the loss to the pupils, is so serious that the remedy should be applied.

The trustees are required by law, (Sect. 40,) to inform the chairman of the committee, when their school is to be opened and when to be closed; but this has scarcely ever been done. The consequence has been that when schools have been closed prematurely, i. e. before the term has expired, the Superintendent has not had the opportunity expected of visiting them the second time.

More care should be taken by trustees to secure good teachers; and if they have been employed in this town or vicinity previously, it should be ascertained how they have discharged their duties and what has been their success. Experience has shown abundantly that persons may possess good literary qualifications, and yet fail sadly in the management of those committed to their care.

In former reports we have avoided a distinguishing notice of the excellencies or defects of each school and each teacher, because we wish not to make invidious comparisons, and because such a delicate business requires a frequency of visitation, and a familiarity with the schools, which is entirely impracticable in a town so extensive as this. Yet, for good order and gratifying progress we may give special commendation to the following schools for the past winter, viz: that in Perryville, Usquepaug, Peace Dale, Wakefield, Kingston, Perkins, Sugar Loaf Hill, Matoonoc and the Pier.

The Superintendent having been a member of the committee for four years, wishes now, at the expiration of his term of service, not to be considered a candidate for re-election. He regrets that he has not discharged the duties of his office in a manner more fully corresponding with the importance of the work to be done. Solicitous for the best good of the hundreds of youth in our schools, it is his fervent wish, that they may be so trained, that they may be examples of all that is excellent in character, and contribute much to the honor and welfare of the country, and the advancement of the religion of the gospel.

JOEL MANN, *Superintendent.*

TABLE No. 1.

No. of District.	LOCAL NAME.	No of families.	State and Town money expended.	Expended for all purposes.	No. of scholars registered.	From other dists.	Over 15 years of age.	Length of school in months.	Average daily attendance.	Teachers' wages per month including board.	Wages exclusive of board.
1	Narragansett,	35	38		39	0	18	4	24		\$20
2	Tower Hill,		81 41	91 36	41	0	23		30		15
3	Kingston,				73	10	4	4	49	\$33	
4	Union,	40			56		11	2 3-4	34		20
5	Rocky Brook,				85	1	7	4	68	37 50	
6	Wakefield,		207 59	307 07	105	1	0	4 1-2	80	35	23 37 1-2
7	Point Judith,	29	96	129 30	25		5	3	18		16
8	Upper Point Judith,	15	101 08	111	15	2	2	33-20	8		20
9	Sugar Loaf Hill,		95	122 50	32		3	4	20		20
10	Matoonoc,		113 22	124 75	28	3	5	4	17		18
11	Stony Point,			121 00	21	0	1	4	14	18	18
12	Perryville,				38	2	13	4	29		20
13	Green Hill,	26	84	90	31		7	4	19		15
14	Tuckertown,	22			17	1	8	4	10	16	
15	Perkins,	23	90	90	19	3	8	4 1-2	14		20
16	Yawgoo,		72	72	24		8	4	17		18
17	Usquepang,	25	180		26		5	3	19		20
18	Dugway,	13	115 68	123	14	1	3	3-3	11	18	
19	Pier,				33		2	4	20		20
20	Peace Dale,		145 22	325 22	61		6	4	48		20
21	Moorsfield,		105 00	127	19		3	3	13		14 1-2

TABLE NO. 2.

Showing the number of Scholars in particular Studies.

No. of District.	No. in Primer and Spelling Book.	No. in Reading.	No. in Geography.	No. in Grammar.	No. in Mental Arithmetic.	No. in Written Arithmetic.	No. in Penmanship.	No. in Algebra.	No. in Philosophy.	No. in Composition.	No. in History.	Teachers Names in Summer Term.	Teachers Names in Winter Term.
1	2	26	2	4	9	15	21	1	5	13	2	Ann E. Tefft.	Frank Sheffield.
2	12	30	12	12	6	27	30	3				James M. Aldrich.	James M. Aldrich.
3	17	68	34	13	17	27	40	2				Henry Root.	+Sherman G. Smith.
4	9	27	23	7	8	24	30	3				Walter A. Locke.	Charles Tucker
5	27	59	29	6	16	24	48	3				Abby A. Hull.	+Abel C. Collins.
6	5	87	38	21	52	53	75	2	4			Fannie G. Hoxie.	+Albert K. Potter.
7	7	20	11	3	5	11	15	1				Mary W. Congdon.	Fannie G. Hoxie.
8	1	16	7	1	6	9	12	1				Sarah A. Browne.	Elisha H. Tefft.
9	9	23	11	8	4	15	23	6				Mary H. Tefft.	Charles V. Segar.
10	8	24	16	2	9	10	25					Mary C. Tucker.	Mary H. Tefft.
11	2	19	8	5	9	7	11					Benj. Cozens.	Benj. Cozens.
12	3	39	30	5	6	28	33	1				Nathaniel G. Stanton.	Nathaniel G. Stanton.
13	6	19	12	4	8	9	16	1		8		John H. Tefft.	Thomas P. Allen.
14	3	14	14	6	5	14	14	1		7		Jonathan E. Tefft.	Thomas P. Allen.
15	2	20	11	8	13	15	19	1		14		Jeremiah Slocum.	Jonathan E. Tefft.
16	4	20	14	7	8	18	19	5	3	7		Jeremiah Slocum.	Jeremiah Slocum.
17	3	26	6	6	12	19	19					Nancy A. Whitford.	Nancy A. Whitford.
18	4	11	6	2	5	3	6				1	Howard E. Miner.	Nancy A. Whitford.
19	9	30	17	6	24	10	26	1				Howard E. Miner.	Howard E. Miner.
20	14	46	35	5	19	24	49			62		Mary P. Perry.	Mary P. Perry.
21	9	17	11	8	11	8	15	2		7		Nancy G. Greene.	Sarah L. Greene.

\* Latin. + Assistant Teachers.—District No. 3, Frances E. Wells; No. 5, Laura H. Rodman; No. 6, Abby A. Hull.

TABLE NO. 3.

Amount apportioned and paid out, &c.

No. of District.	NAME OF DISTRICT.	Average Attendance.	Apportionment of new appropriation of \$16,000.	Apportionment of one-half of all other moneys by districts.	Apportionment of one-half of all other moneys by attendance.	Total of appropriations this year.	Balance in the Treasury last year.	Sum due the District Aug. 9, 1864.	Paid District.	Due District.
1	Narragansett,	28	39 26	41 96	44 80	126 02		126 02	78 00	48 02
2	Tower Hill,	24	39 26	41 96	38 40	119 62		119 62	81 41	38 21
3	Kingston,	45	39 26	41 96	72 00	163 22		163 22	153 22	
4	Union,	30	39 26	41 96	48 00	129 22	12 23	141 61	119 60	22 01
5	Rocky Brook,	66	39 26	41 96	105 60	186 82		186 82	186 82	
6	Wakefield,	44	39 26	41 96	70 40	151 62	65 97	207 59	207 59	
7	Point Judith,	18	39 26	41 96	28 80	110 02	3 53	113 35	96 00	17 35
8	Upper Point Judith,	11	39 26	41 96	17 60	98 82	2 27	101 09	96 09	4 40
9	Sugar Loaf,	25	39 26	41 96	40 00	121 22		113 22	113 22	26 22
10	Matoonoc,	20	39 26	41 96	32 00	113 22		110 02	110 02	
11	Stony Point,	18	39 26	41 96	28 80	110 02		110 02	112 00	8 23
12	Perryville,	24	39 26	41 96	38 40	119 62	61	120 23	112 00	34 02
13	Green Hill,	23	39 26	41 96	36 80	118 02		108 83	104 00	4 83
14	Tuckertown,	13	39 26	41 96	39 26	102 02	69 57	102 02	90 00	12 02
15	Perkins,	21	39 26	41 96	33 60	114 82	2 39	117 21	72 00	45 21
16	Yawgoo,	17	39 26	41 96	32 00	113 22		113 22	113 22	
17	Usquepaug,	13	39 26	41 96	20 80	102 02		115 68	115 68	
18	Dugway,	22	39 26	41 96	35 20	116 42	13 66	116 42	116 42	
19	Pier,	40	39 26	41 96	64 00	145 22		145 22	145 22	
20	Peace Dale,	17	39 26	41 96	27 20	108 02		108 42	105 00	3 42
21	Moonsfield,		39 26	41 96						

R E P O R T  
OF THE  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
OF THE  
TOWN OF WESTERLY.

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*To the Freemen of the Town of Westerly:*

The subscribers, constituting the School Committee of said town, agreeable to the act in relation to Public Schools, beg leave to report:

Your committee have attended to the discharge of their duties, having reference to the wants of the several districts, rather than to the times named in the statute. Your committee held their first meeting at the office of E. & H. Babcock & Co., Aug. 9th, 1854; Present, Geo. D. Cross and Edwin Babcock, and after being engaged, organized by the appointment of Geo. D. Cross, Chairman, and Edwin Babcock, Secretary. An application was made to this committee, accompanying a statement of the cost of a school house and lot in the 9th district, and a vote of said district at a meeting legally held, Aug. 2, 1854, ordering a tax on the ratable property of said district to defray the expense of building a school house and cost of lot, and for necessary fixtures, and asking the approbation of this committee of their doings therein in relation to said tax. Your committee, upon consideration, voted to approve of the doings of said district in relation to said tax.

Your committee also appointed Revds. Thos. H. Vail, Frederick Denison and A. B. Burdick a committee to examine all persons who may present themselves as teachers for the school districts in this town, who shall have arrived at lawful age.

At a meeting of the School Committee held at the counting-room of E. & H. Babcock & Co., January 10th, 1855, Present, Geo. D. Cross



and Edwin Babcock, a petition was presented from sundry inhabitants of the 5th and 7th districts, asking that a new district be set off by this committee, for the better accommodation of those living in said districts, &c. It was, upon consideration, voted, that this Committee meet at the above named place on Friday, January 26, 1855, at 2 o'clock, P. M., for the purpose of hearing all who are interested in said petition, and that notice be this day given to said District of said meeting.

At a meeting of the School Committee, at the before named place, Jan. 26th, 1855, present Geo. D. Cross and Edwin Babcock, the petition from the 5th and 7th School Districts for a new District was called up, and after discussion, it was voted, that Geo. D. Cross be a Committee to confer with the inhabitants of that part of the 5th and 7th Districts who would most probably be included in the territory which would compose the new District, and determine, as far as may be, what boundaries would be most satisfactory, as well as convenient and just to the parties concerned, and report his doings to the Committee. Which report accompanies this report, and is respectfully referred to the freemen for adoption or rejection.

Your Committee, at said meeting, did apportion the public money among the several Districts as follows, viz. :

Amount of old appropriation from State,	-	\$663 29
“ from Registry Taxes,	-	92 05
“ by vote of Town,	-	200 00
Special Appropriation from State, to be divided equally,	471 12	
		<hr/> \$1426 46 <hr/>

District No. 1,	-	\$388 33
“ 2,	-	113 59
“ 3,	-	102 61
“ 4,	-	84 75
“ 5,	-	97 12
“ 6,	-	94 38
“ 7,	-	112 22
“ 8,	-	76 51
“ 9,	-	88 88
“ 10,	-	94 38
“ 11,	-	86 14
“ 12,	-	87 50

All of which has been paid to the order of the trustees of the several districts, with the exception of \$4 75 due the 4th district, and \$14 33 due the 10th district, which now stands to their credit.

The average attendance in the schools for the past year has been as follows, viz. :

No. 1	-	-	232	No. 7	-	-	33
" 2	-	-	33	" 8	-	-	6
" 3	-	-	25	" 9	-	-	21
" 4	-	-	12	" 10	-	-	21
" 5	-	-	29	" 11	-	-	8
" 6	-	-	21	" 12	-	-	40

Making a total of 481 scholars, 27 more than for the year 1854.

Your Committee have no further suggestions to make, as they have heretofore said all that they deem necessary.

Respectfully submitted,

GEORGE D. CROSS,  
EDWIN BABCOCK,  
WELCOME STILLMAN,  
*Committee.*

ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
OF THE  
*Town of North Kingstown.*

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*To the Town Meeting of the Town of North Kingstown, holden June 5th,  
1855:*

The School Committee of the town of North Kingstown, pursuant to the requisitions of the School Law, present their Annual Report.

The Committee was organized after the annual election, in due season. The money raised from the State and town, for the support of Public Schools, was divided and apportioned amongst the districts, (district No. 12 being excluded as heretofore.)

No school was kept during the past winter in District No. 6, nor in District No. 12; but a summer school is now being kept in District No. 6, and we presume will be kept the time required by law. With these exceptions, public schools have been kept during the past winter, or school season, in all the Districts the time required by law, with but little expense to the parents of pupils, and in one or two instances summer schools are now being kept in addition.

The Committee appointed Dr. George H. Church, at a moderate compensation, to visit the schools, as was done the former year. From what we learn from him, and from what we know ourselves, we are satisfied that the state of the schools was about the same the past winter, or school term, as has been in previous years, with something like a moderate improvement.

The same causes which have prevented our schools from being in a flourishing state in years past, to wit, the indifference and inattention of parents, still continue. Something must be also attributed to the inattention of the Committee and Trustees. But we are sensible that we do all we can for the prosperity of the schools under all circumstances, and think that the Trustees do so likewise.

The whole amount of money appropriated for the support of schools in the town, during the past year, was \$1,965 88, to which was added the sum of \$120 10, an unexpended balance, making \$2,085 98, from which sum \$20 was deducted to meet contingent expenses, leaving \$2,065 98, to be divided amongst the districts, according to the several school Acts. Each district receiving \$62 98, No. 4 being reckoned as two districts, and the residue being divided amongst the districts according to the average attendance of scholars.

The said sum of \$2,085 98 was raised as follows :

Amount received from the State,	-	-	\$1,300 46
From the town,	-	-	450 00
From Registry taxes,	-	-	215 42
Unexpended balance of District No. 12,	-	-	120 10
<hr/>			
Amount,	-	-	\$2,085 98

The appropriation of the sum of \$450, on the part of the town will still enable the town to receive from the State the same amount as was received last year. But as the Registry taxes will fall short this year, by at least the sum of one hundred dollars from what they were the year previous, the schools cannot be kept in the several districts as they have been the year past, unless a larger sum by as much as \$100 is raised by the town.

All which is respectfully submitted.

SYLVESTER G. SHEARMAN,

*President of School Committee.*

NICHOLAS N. SPINK, *Secretary.*

NORTH KINGSTOWN, June 4, 1855.

ANNUAL REPORT  
OF  
THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
OF  
THE TOWN OF EXETER.

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*To the Town of Exeter in Town Meeting assembled, June A. D. 1855 :*

It becomes our duty to present to you a concise Report of the condition and progress of the Public Schools in this town during the past year.

Our first act, after organizing, was to add to the Code of Regulations, one requiring all school teachers of said town to assemble once every four weeks, for the purpose of improving in the different branches, and, also, in teaching—and the result, though very favorable, would have been far greater, had all the teachers taken a proper interest in the same.

Knowing the fact that anything to command respect, must itself be respectable, we therefore had some thirty copies of said Regulations printed on heavy board and distributed to each district, retaining the remainder for distribution when needed.

BOUNDARIES OF DISTRICTS.—Some little variation in three instances has been made.

Examination of teachers has been conducted, generally, before the whole Board.

During the past winter there were twelve schools taught, some of which were continued more than four months, the teachers being some of them inexperienced, yet they generally succeeded remarkably well.

In the summer of 1854 there were five schools; the present year (1855) there are ten in successful operation, and we think, will result in effecting a lasting good.

The money has been divided as usual; the new appropriation not subject to a division by the Committee.

On the whole, the past year, though falling vastly short of what might have been done—and should have been done—has been a year more auspicious to the interests of common schools than any of its predecessors, since our acquaintance with the schools of said town.

The amount of appropriations, the length of schools and average attendance of scholars, have been substantially *increased*.

As to school-houses—your Committee have noticed decided improvements in some districts; the old and inconvenient houses are giving place to new and more commodious ones, or by a handsome repairing of the old one. This is especially true in Districts Nos. 4, 7, 1 and 5, the last two having erected each a house of good dimensions—and with some modern improvements. Some might be repaired, and thereby become very acceptable and comfortable, with a little expense. In Districts Nos. 2 and 6 the houses are the meanest apology for school-rooms. If you would make the school-house a pleasant resort for your children, invest it with the like attractions they find and enjoy at home.

But we pass much that needs notice, and indulge a few moments on all-important questions. By what spirit or interest are our schools animated and encouraged? Do they cultivate the higher faculties in the nature of childhood—its conscience—its benevolence—a reverence for whatever is true and sacred—or are they developing upon a grander scale, the desire which prompts men to seek wealth, luxury, preferment, irrespective of the well-being of others? Knowing, as we most assuredly do, that the foundations of national greatness can be laid only in the industry, the integrity, and the spiritual elevation of the people, are we equally sure that our schools are forming the character of the rising generation, upon the everlasting principles of Duty and Humanity?—Above all others must the children of a Republic be fitted for society, as well as for themselves. Each citizen is to participate in the power of governing others, and he should be imbued with a feeling—a first feeling for the wants—a first sense of the rights of those whom he is to govern. Who will deny, that if one *tithe* of the talent and culture which have been expended in legislative halls, in defining offences, and in devising and denouncing punishments for them; or of the study and knowledge which have been spent in judicial proceedings—in *trying and sentencing criminals*; or of the eloquence and the piety which have preached repentance and the remission of sin, to adults—had been consecrated to the instruction of the young, the civilization of mankind would have been adorned by virtues and Christian graces to which it is now a stranger? And will not the good people of Exeter stand upon their feet, and with renewed zeal, put shoulder to the work? Do so and it goes on—

right onward. We know you are not rash nor headlong; you are cautious and stable, but you are more steadfast when thoroughly convinced—you are not profuse and extravagant in your expenditures; but you have money, and am willing to use it for objects known to be important. You have *minds* to discern, and *hearts* to feel, in respect to a concern *so practical and good* as that of Public Education. Let the work go on with vigor and energy, and you may rest well assured of a most happy result.

All which is respectfully submitted.

By order of the Committee.

E. L. BAGGS, *Chairman*.

JOHN H. KNOWLES, M. D.,	} <i>General Committee.</i>
THOMAS A. HAIL,	
E. L. BAGGS,	

ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE OF CHARLESTOWN.

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*To the Electors of the Town of Charlestown, in Town Meeting assembled :*

We, the undersigned, appointed by you in June 1855, to act as School Committee, respectfully submit the following Report :

At a regular quarterly meeting, held on the 2d Monday in July, 1854, the Committee organized, by the appointment of Wm. Foster, Chairman, and Joseph H. Griffin, Clerk.

At a subsequent meeting the Chairman and Clerk were appointed to visit the schools and report.

They report that they have visited all except one, and find them in good condition. Some of the school-houses have been partially repaired, and all are comfortable.

Amount of money appropriated by State and town, \$622 00.

It was voted that twenty dollars be paid to Carolina Joint District, and the rest of the old appropriation from the State and the town appropriations be divided, one-half according to the average attendance, and the other half equally among the seven Districts.

The new appropriation from the State was divided (as the law directs) equally among the several Districts.

WILLIAM FOSTER, *Chairman.*

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HOPKINTON—NO REPORT.

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RICHMOND—NO REPORT.



# ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

## SCHOOL COMMITTEE

OF THE

### Town of Warwick.

*To the Freemen of the Town of Warwick, in Town Meeting assembled, on the first Monday in June, 1855, the School Committee report as follows:*

The moneys used for the support of the Public Schools the past year, came from the following sources:

From the State,	-	-	-	\$2,344 76
" " Town,	-	-	-	1,000 00
" Registration tax, &c.,	-	-	-	352 40
				<hr/>
				\$3,697 16
Add balances due to the several Districts at the beginning of the year,	-	-	-	326 50
				<hr/>
				\$4,023 66

#### EXPENDITURES.

The amount paid out for School purposes this year, has been	-	-	-	\$3,635 61
Balance now in the treasury, due to the Districts,				388 05
				<hr/>
				\$4,023 66

The whole number of scholars who have attended the schools this year was 1,297; the average attendance was 914; the time the schools were kept was 6 5-8 months, and the cost per scholar has been three dollars and ninety-seven cents.

The schools the past year have maintained very nearly the same relative position which they occupied last year. As then anticipated, the cost per scholar has been more, the increase this year having been thirty-three cents per scholar.

Following the example of one of our neighboring towns, the Committee have prepared and submit as a part of their report, the annexed tabular statements, which will present the operations of the public school system in a manner as instructive and interesting as any mode that may be adopted, taken in connexion with the remarks in detail of the Superintendent, published in connexion herewith.

The average attendance of scholars in the schools is small, in contrast with the whole number registered. No improvement in this respect seems to have been made, notwithstanding the Committee have urged, from year to year, the great importance of attention to this thing. It is not only important on account of instruction being imparted to the greatest possible number of children, but the higher the average number can be made, the greater will be the amount of money the districts will receive.

It will be seen by the report of the Superintendent, that he has been somewhat embarrassed in the discharge of his duty as to visiting schools "within the first two weeks of the opening, and within two weeks of the close," as the law requires, for want of due notice from the trustees.—Blanks have been provided for such notices, and the attention of trustees is called to the subject.

The very important subject of school books is frequently presented for the consideration of the Committee. It is a subject which should be treated with the utmost deliberation and care. The list adopted by the Committee in 1846, has been but little changed by any action of the Committee, still it is believed that the books used in the schools generally, may not conform very strictly to the list, teachers, and others, perhaps, taking the liberty from time to time as they might think them needed, to introduce new books, without the sanction of the Committee.

This part of our school system is susceptible of improvement, and with that object in view, on motion of Mr. Smith B. Goodenow, at the meeting of the Committee, holden on the 9th of April last, the following vote was passed:

Voted, That the following be adopted as regulations of the School Committee:

SECTION 1. The School Committee every year at its meeting in July.

shall appoint a Committee or Commissioner on school books, consisting of three persons, to whom shall be committed some particular branch of study, all the accessible text-books in which they shall thoroughly examine, reporting within the year the one most suitable for our schools, and that text-book, when adopted by the Committee, shall continue in use unchanged for five years, or until a new examination in that branch.

SEC. 2. All text-books furnished for examination and not called for, shall remain the permanent property of the School Committee, going to constitute a library of school books, to be kept by the clerk in the Committee's room.

The list of books hitherto adopted by the Committee, is as follows :

NOVEMBER 1846.

Gallaudett's Practical Spelling Book.

Wells' Grammar.

Colburn's First Lessons in Arithmetic.

Morse's School Geography.

Bible or Testament.

Swan's Series of Reading Books.

Russell's American Reader.

Mitchell's Outline Maps.

Worcester's Comprehensive Dictionary.

Thompson's Written Arithmetic.

Winchester's Penmanship.

JULY 11, 1853.

Smith's First and Second Books in Geography, in place of Morse's School Geography.

JANUARY 9, 1854.

Greene's Grammar to be used in the schools after the 1st of April next, in place of Wells' Grammar.

Greenleaf's Primary Arithmetic to be used after the 1st of April next.

Respectfully submitted,

SIMON H. GREENE,

Clerk of the School Committee.

**REPORT**  
**OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**OF THE TOWN OF WARWICK, TO THE**  
**SCHOOL COMMITTEE, 1855.**

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GENTLEMEN :—In submitting to you, and through you to my townsmen, my Third Annual Report, on the state of the Public Schools, I am more than ever impressed with the fact that they are capable of very great improvement. The interest of the scholars, the parents and the public, all demand that this improvement should be made, and the very idea of a superintendence requires that every known means of improvement should be pointed out, and also that any existing obstacles to improvement should be brought to notice. I shall endeavor to do both these, in connection with an exhibition of what improvement has actually been made.

In several of the schools I am happy to say there has been a gratifying improvement, and the same means which have accomplished this, would accomplish still more in the same schools, and if employed in other schools would effect the same result in them. There is nothing mysterious in the operation of favorable or unfavorable influences on the schools. They are like other objects in reference to their growth or decline. Whenever there has been a combined effort on the part of those who have them in charge to raise their character, it has been successful, almost without exception; and whenever there has been indifference, this result has not been accomplished, and when through prejudice or passion obstacles have been thrown in the way, the character of the schools has suffered in proportion. Cases like these, however, seldom occur, and I am happy in being able to say that I consider them in our town less frequent than in some other towns. That disposition to forbearance, which on other subjects where difference of opinion exists, does not resort to extreme measures, operates most happily in our school affairs whenever it is exercised. On a matter where there is so much to affect our private interest and our personal feelings, differences of views must arise, but as it is impossible for all views to be met, it seems reasonable and judicious for individuals not to insist that their peculiar views alone should be preferred.

One of the most encouraging features in our schools at the present time, is the effort that is made to obtain good teachers, and to retain them permanently. If this practice were universal, our schools as a whole, would at once present a new aspect, but with several of them the old round is gone over every year,—a new teacher gets through the term as comfortably as possible, and *perhaps* gets the school advanced a little beyond where the last teacher left it. No lively interest is awakened either in parents or scholars, but rather the school term is too apt to be a tedious operation for all parties.

It requires effort to obtain a good teacher, for as they are always in demand, they are not plenty ; and then it requires further effort to keep them when the public money is expended ; but it is effort which *pays well*, in the condition of the school which results. The change effected in the general aspect of a school in one year, by a superior teacher, is often so great, it is difficult to imagine that it is the same school.

Another encouragement resulting from this, is the interest awakened by it in the community. When on visiting a school, I find a number of the parents and friends present, I conclude from this circumstance, that the school is doing well, and for a time, at least, will continue to do well. "Ambition," that "powerful source of good and ill," presents no small motive to scholars to rise in excellence of scholarship, when it is noticed and appreciated by parents. The love of applause which may lead an ambitious child astray, may be made an influence to lead him upward, instead of downward, when he sees that he rises in the estimation of his superiors, in proportion to his progress.

Every visit to the school is an encomium on its excellencies, and tends directly to promote them. Let the practice of visiting the schools on ordinary occasions, and for the purpose of knowing their real character, and improving it, become common, and it would give an impulse to improvement.

Another favorable influence now operating on our schools, is the general tendency to advancement among teachers in the State. Our State organization, "the Rhode Island Institute of Instruction," our "Rhode Island State Normal School," our "Teachers Institute," and our "Rhode Island Schoolmaster" is now added, all made as available as possible, for the advancement of the cause in the State, by the Commissioner of Public Schools, serve to increase the number of good teachers, and to excite every good teacher to efforts for a higher rank in the profession.

Our teachers feel this influence. As they participate in these advantages, see and know more of good teachers, improvements in teaching, and good schools, they naturally aim higher, and accomplish more.

The number of good teachers who have become permanently settled

in our schools, is already sufficient to have a very beneficial influence in raising the character of the teaching in the town. It is to be hoped that the number will constantly increase.

Of influences unfavorable to the prosperity of the schools, the first I shall mention is the lack of public money, it being insufficient to engage teachers of good qualifications, and to retain them. In the small districts, this proves a serious obstacle to any marked advancement. If a male teacher is employed, it can be for four or five months only, and then he must leave, as a private school will do little towards his compensation, nor will the amount of tuition tax allowed by law provide for the continuance of the school a sufficient time to secure a permanent teacher; and all the evils of constant changes follow unavoidably.

If in such cases the practice adopted in some of the small districts was followed in all, namely, of obtaining a first rate female teacher, to remain permanently, it would no doubt operate favorably, though it is still the misfortune of some of our districts to have scholars who so delight in mischief, that the strength of men seems necessary to restrain them. It seems truly mortifying, that in this day of moral influences, it should form any part of a teacher's labor and difficulty to restrain scholars from such acts and habits, as tend to destroy the peace and progress of the school. It is however necessary, and in many schools, where a female teacher would be well adapted on other accounts, she cannot be employed, for the same reason that she cannot so well manage a vicious horse, or other animal, as a man may do.

It is certainly a remarkable mistake that persons who consider themselves as just becoming "young men," should exhibit more the disposition of animals—brutes.

It has, however, been proved by actual experience, that a good female teacher, constantly employed in the same school, can secure good government, except in some extreme cases.

To encourage such teachers, it seems reasonable that they should be paid more liberally, and more in proportion to what such services would cost, if performed by a male teacher.

But with the best management possible in the expenditure of the money, many of the districts have not enough to insure any considerable improvement in their schools, and the only effectual remedy is, for the town to raise a larger sum for school purposes. When the wealth of the town is taken into consideration, this will be seen to be very easy and suitable. Many of our citizens may not be aware that several towns around us are doing more, in this respect, than our own, with less taxable property.

I have spoken of the highly favorable influences of visiting the schools. I regret to say that this practice is of very limited extent—

extending to only about one-third of the districts. In these schools the effect is good, though it might be still better by being more common. The practice of visiting at all, in the remaining two-thirds, is rare, except an occasional visit from a teacher, and two in a term from the Superintendent. In these schools, if one or two persons, as is sometimes the case, accompany the Superintendent, their presence is embarrassing to the scholars, from the fact that it is an unusual occurrence. Such a state of things is very unfavorable to the schools. They lack the stimulus which visiting occasions, and fall into a state of indifference.

#### DISTRICT No. 1—PAWTUXET.

The school in district No. 1 has been taught by Mr. Z. A. Tobey, Jr., whose return to our public schools adds to our corps of able teachers. Though this occasioned a change in teachers, Mr. Tobey seemed very readily to learn the state of the school, and to enter on the work of its advancement, as though long familiar with its state.

The school has always appeared to be at work, when I have called, and at its close, exhibited a very good amount accomplished, and what was still better, done in a very satisfactory manner. The usual taste in decorating the school room was exhibited at the close, and an unusual number of visitors were present—males as well as females—which I am sorry to say is not common in this town. Were the visits more distributed through the term, they would be far more beneficial, and less embarrassing to the scholars. A more accurate knowledge of the school would also be obtained. Such a practice is very much desired by the teachers, and I would strongly urge it on the consideration of the parents, and friends of the schools, in all the districts.

Mr. Tobey has already opened a private school, and it is to be hoped that he may be well sustained, until the public funds will again support the school.

Last summer there was but little school after the close of the public school in the spring, a circumstance which occasions a great loss to the district.

#### DISTRICT No. 2—SPRING GREEN.

I can say but little of this school for the summer. I did not learn that it had commenced until it had been some time in operation. Twice when I called to visit it, I found the school dismissed, and it was not visited till the close. There was then manifest a great want of interest and activity in the exercises. It appeared that the attendance had been very irregular, a circumstance which seriously counteracts all effort, for the progress and material improvement of any school.

In the winter school there was more real progress than has for a long time been made here. If the school had been in a good condition by the influence of a succession of good previous instruction, a good school house, and a constancy in the attendance of the scholars, its progress would have no doubt been greater.

Mr. Milton Paine was the teacher, who is a good specimen—rare at this time—of a teacher of the old school.

I do not hesitate to confess partiality for some at least of the features of those teachers who were considered good twenty-five years ago. The practice which then prevailed, of requiring a scholar to obtain his knowledge from his text-book as far as possible, seems to me the right process. At present, too much is told to him, and he is allowed to neglect his text-book just as far as he is permitted to get his knowledge from any other source. Even worse than this is sometimes the case, the teacher not unfrequently states that the text-book is but of little use, or in some cases that it is injurious. With the natural tendency of children to dislike study, such a course serves to do away with the practice of studying, which is fatal to scholarship, and the result *usually* is, a less amount of knowledge obtained, and *always*, less firmly fixed in the mind.

Since knowledge is to so large an extent obtained from books and publications, it is one great object to be effected in schools, to teach scholars to obtain it from that source. This was the method in our schools formerly; now the idea seems to prevail that whatever course will impart the greatest amount of knowledge, in the shortest time, is the best method; without sufficient reference to the most effectual way of fixing it in the mind, or of training the mind to acquire it.

Mr. Paine conducted the exercises of the school with firmness, activity and perseverance, and so far as I know, to general satisfaction. The evil of great irregularity in attendance was felt as usual here, and it will be impossible to produce any decidedly favorable change in this school, until some earnest efforts are put forth by the district at large. To my mind the ones most obviously required are a thorough improvement of the school house, constant care to obtain good teachers, and have the children attend regularly. These means rarely or never fail. Parents and scholars become interested, and the school necessarily rises.

#### DISTRICT No. 3—THE PLAIN.

This school was taught in the summer by Miss Mary E. Hale, who has been employed several terms in the town, and who devotes herself with activity to her work, and with good success. One feature of her



teaching is a natural way of illustrating and impressing ideas on the mind; her method is very well adapted to small scholars.

The school was very small when first visited, only ten being present, but appeared to be doing well. It closed rather sooner than was expected, and as I was not notified, it was not visited the second time.

Mr. Henry S. Card taught in the winter, and appeared to labor faithfully, but there was not that activity in the exercises which is essential, still the appearance and progress were quite satisfactory.

#### DISTRICT No. 4—OLD WARWICK.

This school has experienced the evils of continued changes in the teachers. The first teacher employed in the summer was dismissed, because of the evident neglect of the ordinary exercises of the school, for attention to peculiar speculations, which seemed to have engrossed his mind.

The second teacher appeared to have good literary qualifications, and to conduct the school with good judgment, but hardly continued long enough to show what would have been his success, the public funds being expended.

Still another teacher was employed in the winter, Mr. Oliver P. Sarle, who evidently devoted himself to the duties of the school, with great fidelity. Some disposition to resist authority was manifested by a few boys, which increased the labor of the teacher, and disturbed the harmony of the school; but by firmness, the teacher maintained his authority, and preserved a very good degree of order in the school. In suppressing whispering, that old tormentor of teachers, Mr. Sarle was very successful. The character of the instruction appeared to be good, and the progress commendable, though in one term, especially with some difficulties in government, a teacher can hardly show his full ability in the department of instruction. This fact should always be considered, in judging of the ability of a new teacher. There is in this district a great lack of interest with parents. But very few visits were made by them to the school.

#### DISTRICT No. 5—APPONAUG.

The summer school commenced under a new teacher, Miss Mary Greene. She found it in great disorder, and though apparently well qualified in literary attainments, evidently lacked experience for such a state of things. The difficulties of the situation proved too great for her, and the result was, as in too many cases, order and authority were not secured.

The winter term was under the instruction of Mr. Varnum A. Cooper, who undertook it with a knowledge of the great difficulties to contend

with, but with a fixed determination to overcome them. His success was all that could reasonably be expected. Great improvement was made in the order of the school, and still more in the instruction. His continuance in it, with a reasonable co-operation on the part of the parents, must result in a very gratifying elevation.

#### DISTRICT No. 6—NATICK.

The public school for the previous winter, was closed about the middle of March. There was a private school during a considerable portion of the vacation between the terms of the public school. But few comparatively attended the private school, and it was a great loss to the children generally to be out of the school so long, as a vacation of nearly eight months.

The winter school was commenced under new teachers in each of the departments, they, however, were a very competent body.

Mr. A. M. S. Carpenter was the Principal, and brought to the work good literary qualifications and considerable experience in a variety of schools. His instructions were clear, and the progress of the school commendable.

Finding, as he did, the school in good condition, and being very successful in securing the attachment of his scholars, his success was good for the time. His assistants, Miss Mary F. Low, and Miss Mary Fuller, were both experienced teachers, and their departments each appeared in excellent order.

#### DISTRICT No. 7—PHENIX.

This school continued under two of its former teachers, and the third had taught a private school during the summer, previous to opening the public school.

Like the school at Natick, there was a long period between the close of one public school and the commencement of the next, but as there was a pretty large attendance of the same scholars at the private school that were attending on the public school, they continued under the instruction of the same teachers, and it helped to preserve the identity of the school though in a manufacturing population, the changes are so constant that teachers see but little result from their labors. And their scholars often leave just as a teacher is beginning to effect something valuable in their improvement. For these reasons there is great gain when a district can obtain teachers worthy of being retained, and then can retain them in a private school during the recess of the public school. The highest department, under Mr. Cooper, exhibited the results of constant and faithful labor. Possessing in a high degree the confidence

and esteem of his scholars, he was able to secure their earnest efforts, and a cheerful compliance with his wishes.

Mr. Cooper has labored arduously for two years in this district, and has as fully met the expectation of his patrons, as it ordinarily falls to the lot of a teacher to do.

The district would have been glad to retain his services but the demand from the West presented inducements to which he yielded.

Miss Julia A. Greene and Miss Mary E. Hale were his assistants, and their departments appeared in good condition, and evinced good progress.

One serious obstacle to the full success of this school is the want of a school-house, in which all the departments can have suitable accommodations. The benefits of such a provision are constantly felt, and they serve both to give greater efficiency to the teachers' labors, and to obviate difficulties which continually arise, when a good house is wanting. Such an investment, when judiciously made, seldom or never fails to secure great benefits. Several of the districts are now reaping them, and the money thus expended no doubt yields as good a revenue to the district as that expended for teachers. In this district, embracing so large an amount of property, the burden of building would be very small in comparison with the benefit which would follow.

Whatever tends to the promotion of general education, will always be found to pay well in its effect on morals, industry and good order. In settling this question now, the wants of twenty-five years to come, and of 1000 children probably, should be taken into account.

#### DISTRICT No. 8—CENTREVILLE.

A favorable change has at length come over this school. Mr. Adams was engaged here about the first of April, 1854, and has continued since that time with only such vacations as were necessary. He has had the constant assistance of Miss Ann Maria Hamilton, who has labored here very successfully for more than two years past.

This is a rare specimen of the uninterrupted continuance of a *public* school for a year (and still in progress) under the same teachers. Such a measure could hardly fail to produce the most gratifying results.—They are now to be seen in the amount accomplished, and in the fondness for study, and habits of application which have been cultivated. The teachers have both worked earnestly, and have infused a spirit of industry and activity into the school. Every term of its continuance, under its present arrangements, must bring a good return to the district.

The improvements in a school must be gradual, and after the most obvious ones are made, the spirit of improvement reaches others, and

such as are more difficult to be reached. In this school what seems next to be required for its elevation, is a further improvement in the habits of scholars out of school, particularly while in and around the school-room. It is exceedingly unfortunate that so much of roughness and rudeness of manner should have become common at school, but in many districts it is as true as unfortunate. The correction cannot be suddenly made, as it is not seen and felt to be a serious evil till after long and earnest efforts, but it should engage the constant attention of all teachers.

The subject of a school-house, more adapted to the actual wants of the district, and in a better location, and the question of the provision for the Arctic village are still open for consideration, and are worthy of a liberal policy. There is now a most favorable opportunity to make such arrangements as shall afford for years to come, ample facilities for education to a large population.

#### DISTRICT No. 9—SOUTHERN.

In this district a period of eight months intervened, between the close of one school and the beginning of the next. Such a length of time, with no school for any portion of the scholars cannot but result in great loss.

Before the commencement of the school for the past winter, considerable damage was done to the school-house, and it showed on the part of whoever did it, the want of such training as our schools ought to furnish.

An assemblage of idle boys in the street is a school of vice where scholars make rapid proficiency. Mr. Peleg Kenyon taught the school again, and as last winter succeeded in awakening considerable interest and effort among the scholars—quite as much as could be expected under the circumstances. If the school could be resumed soon, under a good teacher there would be reason to hope for a gratifying advancement. Some effort on the part of the district is very necessary to afford more abundant means for carrying on the school, and to give encouragement by their presence occasionally within it. The teacher's register would no doubt show a very small number of visits to the school during the last term.

#### DISTRICT No. 10—COWESET.

This school was taught in the summer by Miss Mary Fuller, and its appearance was very satisfactory. So far as I know, there was good satisfaction throughout the district.

In the winter Miss Harriet A. Browning was engaged, from the belief that good success might be expected from her well established reputa-

tion. She entered on her duties with her usual faithfulness, but found in the great number of studies and classes, too much labor for her time and strength. On visiting the school and learning the state from my own observation, and her statements, I proposed the abandonment of such text-books as were unauthorized, and which increased the number of classes, and the giving up of some classes in the higher branches, that the attention of the teacher might be more fully given to the common branches, which greatly needed it. This course called forth severe censure, and the teacher left. A new teacher was obtained, Miss Mary A. Buckley, who was well recommended, and who had succeeded well elsewhere. As a firm determination had been manifested by some of the parents to control the matter of studies in the school, I stated to the second teacher, what had been the complaint, and that if she had time, and was willing, there was no objection to her teaching Algebra, which was the branch on which most of the remarks of dissatisfaction had been made. I at the same time told her, that I did not consider there was any authority that could compel her to do it, and this I felt it necessary to say for her protection. I have found by inquiry and examination, that this opinion is sustained by the highest authority, though when I proposed the abandonment of that branch, I intended it as advisory and the reference to authority was first made by those who were dissatisfied with my recommendation.

Miss Buckley declined to give instruction in Algebra, for what reason I am not aware. She continued her labors till near the close of the term, and would evidently have succeeded well in the school, but the influence of complaints from without, resulted in so much disturbance within the school, that she felt compelled to close before the time. I was not apprised of the facts, and therefore did not visit it at the close.

At my first visit to the school, under each of the teachers, there were indications that it would have succeeded well if there had been no interference from without.

#### DISTRICT No. 11—POTOWOMUT.

Miss Browning taught here two terms, of three months each, during the season when fire was not needed, but no school was had during the winter, from the want of any suitable school-room. During the time the school was in session, all was accomplished that could have been expected. The teacher's faithfulness did much to supply deficiencies, and through the constant efforts of Capt. Joseph Spencer, she has been employed here pretty constantly for the past three years, though there has been no organization in the district.

It is very gratifying to know that measures have recently been taken to provide a suitable school-house, and that there is a willingness to

supply the deficiency here, which has so long existed. This gratification will be complete, if the work is now accomplished, and a benefit will be conferred on the rising generation, which no one can fully estimate.— Every good school-house is a monument to the intelligence, wisdom and public spirit of its builders.

#### DISTRICT No. 12—CROMPTON.

There was unfortunately a change in this district, when it was apparently doing very well, in many respects, and would undoubtedly have done well in all, by a continuance and co-operation, such as could have been secured. One defect after another can be discovered and remedied when a school is going on under circumstances, generally favorable, but when it breaks up, it is impossible to foresee what unfavorable influences may affect it.

On opening the public school for this year, great pains were taken to obtain a good teacher, and the district proposed to raise by tax sufficient money to pay the assistants, in order to have funds to continue the public school longer, and the school opened with flattering prospects, under Mr. T. V. Haines, from Massachusetts. He came well recommended, and his labors indicated his ability to attain an eminence in the profession, under favorable circumstances. One or two cases of discipline occurred in the early part of the school, in which there might have been some indiscretion, on the part of the teacher, and some temporary injury resulted to the scholars corrected, though evidently unintentional.— These circumstances created a prejudice, and in various ways operated unfavorably, on the teacher's influence and on the school. To prevent the recurrence of injudicious punishment, the trustees felt it necessary to prohibit corporeal punishment, and this resulted unfavorably on the government. The instruction however, appeared to be excellent, and the school appeared well when visited.

The second term continued about six weeks, and closed from the expenditure of the public funds, the amount that had been voted for a tax, not having been paid.

Misses M. J. Maroni and Myrtilla Peirce were the assistants. Their departments were large, and were not kept sufficiently quiet, though the teachers labored assiduously.

The school-house was much improved by repairs.

#### DISTRICT No. 13—PONTIAC.

This school has continued under the care of Miss Lucy E. Hall, who has become one of the oldest teachers with her school in town. This circumstance gives her very great advantage for bringing her school into a high state of improvement which she turns to good account.—

The school is well organized, and makes a very steady progress, and is in a great measure free from the many difficulties to which schools are liable, both from within and without. It will be greatly for the interest of the parents, to avail themselves as fully and as constantly as possible, of the benefits afforded by it.

#### DISTRICT No. 14—GREENVILLE.

In this district there was about the usual length of public school, under Mr. Aldrich, who has become as permanent, almost, as the school-house itself. While the public school is not in session, the private school continues, and thus the benefits of a constant and excellent school are enjoyed by a large portion of the district. It is refreshing to have some cases of such a character, without the usual trials and perplexities resulting from incessant changes, and frequent failures.

It is almost needless to say that the condition of the school was highly satisfactory. Miss Abby N. Searle was the assistant. Considerable improvement was made by the painting of the school-rooms.

#### DISTRICT No. 15—CENTRAL.

This school, which for so long a time had the benefit of the same teacher constantly, has for the past two years changed every term.—The condition of the school was such that the different teachers have had very good success, notwithstanding these changes. Miss Abby E. Remington, taught during the summer, and Miss Elizabeth F. Bucklyn, in the winter.

The district have, however, resolved on returning again to the practice of greater permanence in the teacher. Miss Bucklyn gave very general satisfaction, and her patrons, with remarkable unanimity, have expressed a wish for her continuance in school. Such an aim seems very desirable, in all the districts, to find competent and faithful teachers, and put them in charge of the schools; and then sustain and assist them, and keep them there as long as is profitable.

In visiting the schools, a few things have attracted my notice as worthy of some remark to the teachers, as a body.

One is, the tendency of teachers to assist scholars too much. They have a strong desire that the scholars should understand their lessons, and when they do not, it is very natural to help them (both in preparing and reciting) or what is worse, to do their work for them. The result of this is, that the scholar makes less effort, and is less able to overcome other difficulties as they arise. The result of a teacher's efforts should be to make scholars able to help themselves, and one direct way to do this, is to accustom them to as much effort as possible. Constant work gives strength and skill, but this is what few scholars are fond of, until

a fondness has been cultivated. It should be required and obtained.—The more a scholar learns from his book, the more certain he will be to remember it, and the greater will be his ability to learn from books, which are the great sources of knowledge. He should be assisted where he is unable to go alone, like the child in learning to walk.

He must be occasionally helped to rise to his feet, and aided when the distance is too far for his strength; and by his own efforts, he will be continually acquiring strength and confidence. But if instead of this he is carried, he remains in a comparatively helpless condition, and will require constant assistance. When a scholar depends on the teacher to tell him all he has neglected to learn, he will be sure to need much telling. He should be assisted, when he would not by any reasonable effort, be able to succeed without. This will prevent discouragement, and encourage effort.

With some teachers there is not sufficient attention to the neatness of the school-room. This is not only a fault in itself, but its influence on the habits is bad. If scholars are taught to be particular and nice in one thing, they are prepared by that, to pay more attention to the manner in which they do others. So on the contrary, if they are allowed in negligence in reference to habits of neatness, they are liable to become negligent in reference to many things in their ordinary exercises, and in their deportment. Strict attention to neatness, may therefore be made an auxiliary to many other improvements.

It should be insisted on as a cardinal virtue with scholars, that they should endeavor to do every thing well and be constantly aiming at improvement.

A few of the teachers, in their zeal to effect the greatest improvement in their schools, attach great importance to the use of some particular text-book, sometimes actually introducing it without waiting for the proper authority. This practice always occasions irregularity in the books, and not only embarrasses the Committee in their efforts to secure uniformity, but gives rise to many complaints with parents, of frequent changes, and makes the necessary changes more difficult.

Though, in some of these cases there might be a gain, in the introduction of a new book, often as much as might be accomplished, without the evils, by a more skillful use of the books already adopted.

The recent action of the School Committee in reference to the examination and adoption of text-books, seems very fully to provide for the introduction of the best. It is very desirable that teachers should not throw any difficulties in the way of this effort, and that parents should assist in carrying it into effect, by conforming to the authorized changes, and avoiding all others.

As a means for exciting a spirit of progress in our schools, and for



communicating a great amount of judicious practical suggestions, I would earnestly recommend the circulation of the "Rhode Island School-master." It will afford efficient aid to the teachers, school officers, and parents generally. Its tendency will be to raise the interest and increase the efforts of all classes of persons who are immediately connected with our public schools, for their higher elevation and more rapid progress,—a result most desirable.

GEORGE A. WILLARD,

*Superintendent of Schools.*

OLD WARWICK, May 15, 1855.

Statement showing the amount of public money expended in each School District for the year ending May 1, 1855, and the balances unexpended, due from the Town Treasury to the several Districts.

No.	Local Name.	Summer School.	Winter School.	Total Both	Balance due District.
1	Pawtuxet,	\$	\$217 80	\$217 80	\$
2	Spring Green,	62 00	126 37	188 37	15 18
3	Plains,	56 00	122 50	178 50	50 76
4	Old Warwick,	121 05	85 00	206 05	5 11
5	Apponaug,	44 00	157 40	201 40	
6	Natick,		362 29	362 29	15 11
7	Phenix,		350 00	350 00	9 29
8	Centreville,	279 53		279 53	
9	Southern,		176 95	176 95	7 83
10	Coweset,	64 00	72 90	136 90	84 82
11	Potowomut,	108 00		108 00	79 65
12	Crompton,		311 25	311 25	69 28
13	Arnold's Bridge,	87 90	119 82	207 72	14
14	River Point,	338 80		338 80	34 60
15	Central,	60 00	89 50	149 50	24 52
					\$296 30
Deduct balance due from contingent account,					8 25
					\$388 05

Statement showing the number of Scholars registered, and the average attendance in each District, for the year ending May 1, 1855; also, the amount of money apportioned to each District.

No.	Local Name.	Scholars Registered	Average Attendance.	Money Apportioned.	Length of Terms.
1	Pawtuxet,	76	60	\$217 67	5 mos.
2	Spring Green,	40	22	175 35	8 3-4
3	Plains,	35	20	175 35	8
4	Old Warwick,	66	41	211 66	5
5	Apponaug,	54	37	201 40	10
6	Natick,	170	188	369 05	4 1-2
7	Phenix,	236	155	359 29	5
8	Centreville,	114	79	279 53	6 1-2
9	Southern,	40		185 12	5
10	Coweset,	37		172 10	7 1-4
11	Potowomut,	24		168 84	6
12	Crompton,	165		378 82	4 1-4
13	Arnold's Bridge,	56		207 90	10 1-8
14	River Point,	145	11	321 86	6 1-2
15	Central,	39	22	173 72	7 3-4

Contingent Accounts,

\$100 00

Statement showing the names of Teachers, the length of School Terms, and the monthly wages paid for year ending May 1, 1855.

No.	SUMMER TERM.		Residence.	Term Months.	Wages.	WINTER TERM.		Residence.	Term Months.	Wages.
	Teachers.					Teachers.				
1	No Public School.					Z. A. Tobey,		Warwick,	5 mos.	\$40
2	Mary C. Harris,		Warwick,	3 3-4	\$16	Milton Paine,		Webster,	5	28
3	Mary E. Hale,		Plainfield, Conn.	4	14	H. S. Card,		Richmond,	4	29
4	School not satisfactory.					O. P. Sari,		Scituate,	5	27
5	Mary E. Greene,		Warwick,	2 3-4	16	V. A. Cooper,		Warwick,	5	30
*6	No Public School.					A. M. S. Carpenter,		do.	4 1-2	35
*7	do.					L. A. Cooper,		do.	5	35
8	Dwight R. Adams,		Warwick,	6 1-2	38	No Public School.				
9	Anna M. Hamilton,		do.		12			Hopkinton,	5	31 1-2
10	No Public School.					Peleg Kenyon,		Providence,	3 1-4	20
11	Mary Fuller,		Cranston,	4	16	Mary Buckley,				
*12	Harriet A. Browning,		East Greenwich,	6	18	No Public School.				
13	No Public School.					T. V. Haines,				
14	Lucy E. Hall,		Warwick,	3 3-4	18	Lucy E. Hall,		Warwick,	4 1-4	40
	J. K. Aldrich,		do.	6 1-2	40	No Public School.			3	18
15	Abby N. Searle,		do.		14 16					
*	Abby E. Remington,		do.	3 3-4	16	E. F. Buckley,		Warwick,	4	20
	No. 6, three departments.					Mary F. Low,		Intermediate,	4 1-2	18
	No. 7, do.					Mary Fuller,		Primary,		16
	No. 12, do.					Julia A. Greene,		Intermediate,	5	18
						Mary E. Hale,		Primary,		17
						Mary J. Maroni,		Intermediate,		20
						Maria M. Pierce.		Primary.		20

# R E P O R T

OF THE

## SCHOOL COMMITTEE

OF THE

### TOWN OF COVENTRY.

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*The School Committee of Coventry, R. I., in accordance with the usual custom of their predecessors, and in compliance with the laws of this State, respectfully submit the following Report :*

At a meeting of the electors of this town, held on Monday, June 5th, 1854, James B. Scott, Henry S. Vaughn and Benjamin V. Gallup were elected School Committee for the year ensuing.

As soon as convenient after the election they met and organized, appointing Benjamin V. Gallup, Chairman, and Henry S. Vaughn, Clerk.

Four regular and ten special meetings have been held during the year. In apportioning the public money, examining teachers, and visiting schools, the board decided to observe the customs of the Committee of the year previous. The transactions of the Committee will now be referred to under their respective departments.

#### DISTRICT LIMITS.

There have been made no alterations with regard to the boundaries of districts during the past year.

#### SCHOOL FUND.

The whole amount apportioned was	-	-	\$2,071 44
Received from the State, -	-	\$1,547 68	
"    "    Town Tax, -	-	200 24	
"    "    Registry Tax, -	-	251 15	
Apportionment of District No. 10,		72 35	
Undivided last year, -	-	02	\$2071 44

The amount apportioned each District, average attendance, &c., is shown in the following Table.

No. of District.	NAME OF DISTRICT.	Scholars Enrolled.	Average attendance.	Due Aug. 19th, 1854.	Amount Expended.	Balance.
1	Nicholas.			\$182 86		
2	McGregor.	21	12	104 88	76 00	28 88
3	Hopkins.	63	37	128 01	195 00	115 87
4	Rice City.	41	32	116 91	100 00	16 91
5	Aquidnec.	41	28	114 87	100 00	14 87
6	Bowen's Hill.	30	22	113 31	113 31	
7	Spruce	35	24	121 26	121 26	
8	Town House.	27	21	109 71	40 00	69 71
9	Andrew.	22	11	112 11	99 00	13 11
10	Geo. W. Greene			105 21		105 21
11	Central.	38	31	116 01	116 01	14 31
12	Whitman Factory	24	14	104 31	90 00	27 38
13	Read.	16	13	107 38	80 00	
14	Washington.	86	58	146 61	146 61	14 33
15	Colvin.	26	17	137 33	123 00	
16	Coventry Village.	62	35	119 61	119 61	
17	Teffts.	76	49	149 86	149 86	
18	Harrisville.	102	60	135 81	135 81	

#### TEXT BOOKS.

With regard to Text Books, the Committee thought that with a very few exceptions, (if any,) those now in use in the schools of this town are among the best extant, consequently have made no changes, and believing that there are books upon a sufficient number of sciences to be advantageously taught in common schools, have made no additions.

#### EXAMINATION OF TEACHERS.

This duty has been performed by the board in some instances, and in others by the individual members, each acting as a sub-committee. Teachers for the winter term were examined by the board generally, those for the summer by a sub-committee. In all, there have been examined twenty-six teachers, twenty of whom received certificates, the remainder—six—failing to satisfy the Committee of their competency for so high and responsible a calling, were rejected.

In the discharge of this duty we have endeavored to give each candidate an impartial trial, occupying a sufficient length of time—from two to six hours in each instance—for each one to do himself justice, and give the Committee a fair representation of his qualifications.

Those who received the approbation of the Committee seemed con-

cious that a higher degree of intelligence was called for, and manifested a disposition to be able to meet the demand, while those who were rejected, in most instances submitted without murmuring, having become satisfied that they were deficient.

#### STATE OF THE SCHOOLS.

The members of the Committee living in different parts of the town, took it upon themselves each to visit and have the oversight of that portion of the schools which was nearest and most convenient, consequently they could not be visited by the board, which would have been desirable, and much more pleasant and profitable. It is believed, however, that with few exceptions, they were visited according to law.

In one instance the school closed while that committee whose duty it was to visit it was out of town. In another, the committee to whose supervision the school was assigned, did not receive due notice of the time of its commencing or closing, and in two others, the schools being taught by members of the committee, it was not deemed absolutely necessary to give them an official visit.

At these visitations, the committee endeavored to impress upon the minds of the pupils, the importance of strict obedience to the rules and discipline of the school, to encourage them to be punctual in attendance, prompt in recitation, and persevering in their efforts to acquire useful information.

Concerning the school houses, we are happy to state that they are generally in good condition, some of them having been repaired during the year.

The several schools will now be noticed in their order.

#### DISTRICT No. 1, AND DISTRICT No. 3.

The schools in these two districts are united, and occupy the school house in district No. 3,—Hopkins.

A summer term was commenced here by Mr. Aaron W. Bates, previous to the organization of the present committee. Soon after they were qualified to act, the members visited the district; found the school house closed, and learned, on enquiry, that Mr. Bates after teaching five weeks, had asked and received a dismissal, wishing to engage in other business. Of course, of the merits or demerits of his school during the short term it continued, they are unable to speak. Subsequently, a term was taught by Miss Maria E. Bowen. This was a very good school. The house was neat, good order prevailed, the teacher labored diligently, and succeeded in awakening in the scholars a good degree of interest in the studies pursued. Of course, gratifying improvement was the result. The winter school was taught by Mr.

Wilkins U. Potter, who labored faithfully and successfully for its improvement, though the crowded state of the house, the necessarily increased number of classes, and the irregularity of the attendance, rendered it very difficult to secure the excellence of order and thoroughness of teaching which characterised the school during the preceding term. This school ought immediately to be provided with outline maps, a globe and other apparatus. That every district should be furnished with these important aids to successful teaching is very desirable, but the size and present circumstances of this school seem *especially* to demand it.

#### DISTRICT No. 2—McGREGOR.

The school in this district is small. No summer term was kept. The winter school was taught by Mr. Welcome A. Colvin. At the first visit the school appeared to be doing very well, though the teacher was not perhaps quite so energetic as some others. Complaint was afterwards made to the committee that improper punishments had been resorted to by the teacher, but upon investigation, the charge was not sustained. At the visit near the close of the term, so few scholars were present, owing partly to sickness in the neighborhood, and partly to dissatisfaction on the part of parents, that the committee cannot speak definitely concerning the improvement made, and can only say that at each of the visits good order appeared to be maintained.

#### DISTRICT No. 4—RICE CITY.

This district had no summer school. The winter term was taught by Mr. Joseph Tillinghast, an experienced and competent teacher. Though this school contained some scholars who had made good advancement, the majority were small and backward, which rendered it less interesting than some others, but it was perseveringly taught, and very perceptible improvement was made by the scholars, both in their studies and deportment.

#### DISTRICT No. 5—AQUIDNIC.

The summer school in this district was taught by Miss Esther E. Bowen. As it commenced before the present Committee was qualified, it had been taught several weeks before it was visited. At this time good order appeared to have been established, and the school was evidently making improvement. At the second visit only eight or nine small scholars were present; but judging from their appearance, and that of the school at the former visit, it is probable quite good progress would have been made, had the teacher received proper encouragement, and the co-operation of the parents.

The trustees engaged Mr. Layton E. Seamans to teach their winter school, who appeared before the committee for examination; but being a stranger to one member of the same, was inquired of in reference to his moral character; but failed to satisfy them that on this point he was legally qualified. They therefore refused him an examination, and gave him their reason for so doing. After the lapse of several weeks, the committee providentially heard that Mr. Seamans had procured a State certificate, and was teaching said school; but were not officially informed of the fact till it had been in session some four or six weeks, and feeling that all was not right, refused to recognize the school.

In investigating the subject, it was ascertained that the Inspector who signed his county certificate, and the Commissioner who countersigned it, were not in possession of all the facts in the case at the time, and farther, that had they been, according to information from them obtained, the certificate would by no means have been given. This led the committee to suspect that unjustifiable means were taken to procure said certificate, and believing that if, at the time he was rejected by the committee, he was disqualified, he was no less so at any subsequent time, accordingly after mature deliberation, on the 29th of January, 1855, by authority in them vested in Sec. 56 of the "Acts relating to Public Schools," the committee dismissed said Seamans from the office of teacher of public school in the town of Coventry.

Notwithstanding this, he continued the school, as we were informed, having been authorized so to do by the Trustees of said district.

The Commissioner being apprised of this circumstance, proposed a compromise, by which the committee were to recognize Mr. Seamans' school, and he was to give up his State certificate, and remain as one of their certificated teachers.

To this the committee agreed, and offered Mr. Seamans a certificate, which would approbate him for the term in which he was engaged, and which had been referred to, and approved by the Commissioner. But he refused to accept it, by which the compromise failed of accomplishing its object.

With regard to the condition of said school the committee would not presume to speak, not having exercised any supervision over it.

Soon after the close of the term, application was made to the committee, for an order for all the money in the treasury belonging to said district. This order would have been promptly given, had Mr. Seamans conformed to the proposed compromise. An order *was* given for so much money as would pay Mr. Seamans for the time he had taught, up to the time of his dismissal, including that day. This left a balance of \$14 87 in favor of said district, for which the committee refused to give an order, claiming that after the 29th of January, 1855, Mr. Seamans



was not a legally qualified teacher, and consequently were not authorized by law to do so.

From this decision of the Committee the Trustees appealed to the Commissioner, praying that that decision might be reversed. But the Commissioner, after an impartial trial, in his decision upon the case, sustained the Committee in the course they had taken. We are aware that the transactions in reference to this case have subjected the committee to the censure, and even to the ridicule of some, but in this, as in all other of their acts, they have been governed by what they considered duty, and have discharged that duty irrespective of persons.

#### DISTRICT No. 6—BOWEN'S HILL.

The summer and winter terms of this school were both taught by Miss Mary E. Albro, a very successful teacher.

At all the visits the house was neat, the scholars appeared interested, and the school well, though mildly governed, and very thoroughly taught.

#### DISTRICT No. 7—SPRUCE.

Alice Williams, teacher. At first visit found the school well attended, and seemed to be doing well. Several young ladies present manifested a becoming interest in the welfare of the school. Unfortunately, at second visit, but very few scholars were present. Owing to some cause unknown to the committee, the older scholars had left school which made quite a difference to the appearance of it; however, from the examination the committee was able to make of those present, the improvement was commendable.

The winter term, taught by Mr. Jared Griffiths, was much better attended. Quite a number of adult scholars attended, who took decided interest in the prosperity of the school, and labored in a commendable manner.

The teacher did his best to advance his pupils, and in some branches succeeded well. Order good. Grammar and reading exercises were quite satisfactory. Not so much improvement in arithmetic as was hoped at first visit. On the whole, very good proficiency was made by the school generally. The older scholars evinced quite a different spirit from that of last winter term, and the committee had the satisfaction of finding a friendly feeling existing between them and the teacher, so essential to the progress desired. This school stands among the first in town in point of advancement.

#### DISTRICT No. 8—TOWN HOUSE.

The summer term was taught by their former teacher, Miss Allen, a lady well qualified for teaching, and who managed the school in a

manner satisfactory to the committee and her employers. The trustee did not succeed in securing the services of a teacher for the winter term, although he made an engagement with two or three: therefore had no school.

DISTRICT No. 9—ANDREW.

Reuben W. Scott, teacher. Teacher's second term in this school. Very good order. Teacher labored faithfully with his scholars, and at the second visitation the committee was highly gratified in finding a much larger number present than at any former visit. The school bore evidence of much training, and acquitted themselves in a praiseworthy manner. Everything about the premises had been improved, and the school was satisfactory to the district.

DISTRICT No. 10—GEORGE W. GREEN.

We are obliged to say, as has been said in former reports, that this district has neither school nor school house. A manifest indifference to the intellectual culture of their children, has seemed to pervade the minds of the inhabitants.

There have, however, been some indications recently of their arousing from this dormant state, and making an effort to secure the advantages of a school. We hope that if there is a spark of interest yet left, it will be nourished, and that our successors will be able to give them a more favorable report.

DISTRICT No. 11—CENTRAL.

The summer term of this school was under the care of Miss Maria E. Bowen, their former teacher. Much effort was made on the part of the teacher for the advancement of the school, and was attended with a good degree of success. The discipline was unexceptionable, and the exercises in Geography, Mental and Written Arithmetic were interesting, the scholars evincing a thoroughness in each branch. Altogether the school made good proficiency, and bore marked evidence of a skillful and efficient teacher.

The winter term was commenced by Mr. Williams, who appeared not to understand our system of teaching, and therefore labored under much embarrassment. After teaching a few weeks, learning that there was some dissatisfaction with his school, he very unceremoniously left and did not return. Another term of three months was taught by Mr. Cole. The Committee regret that they were unable to visit this school, but learn that it was acceptable and satisfactory to the proprietors.

DISTRICT No. 12—WHITMAN.

Stephen W. Griffin, teacher. The school in this district is small.—As might be expected, good order was established. The Committee.

found the school engaged in the rudiments, and their recitations gave evidence that there was an intention, on the part of both teacher and pupils, to become very familiar with the branches studied. At the second visitation it was found that good discipline had been maintained, and such improvement made as to warrant the Committee in commending the school.

#### DISTRICT No. 13—READ.

This district secured the services of Mr. Isaac Paine, who, it is believed, labored faithfully to instill into the minds of his pupils those principles which are so necessary to success. But it is to be feared that his labors were not fully appreciated on the part of some of the older male members of the school. Yet, notwithstanding all this, the school as a whole, evinced a very good degree of improvement, and if there was not all that advancement desirable, in the opinion of the Committee, the blame cannot be attached to the teacher.

#### DISTRICT No. 14—WASHINGTON.

This school having been taught by a member of the Committee, it is not deemed expedient to remark farther than to say that the usual interest was manifested on the part of the district, and much credit is due them for the efforts they have heretofore made, and are still making, to secure to their children a convenient, comfortable and well furnished house, in which to receive their education. With regard to the success attendant upon the labor of the teacher, it is preferred that others speak.

#### DISTRICT No. 15—COLVIN.

A summer term in this district was taught by Miss Godfrey, a lady well qualified for the position, and who conducted the exercises in a pleasing and skillful manner. The recitations were distinguished for their clearness, distinctness and correctness; the order good, and progress perfectly satisfactory to the Committee.

The winter term was taught by Mr. Braman W. Matteson. At the first visit the Committee found the school doing very well, giving evidence that an effort was being made to maintain the good reputation it had already acquired, and that improvement was their object. At the second visit the Committee were pleased to find their anticipations to a good degree realized. The school showed unmistakeable signs of improvement, which speaks very well for Mr. Matteson, as a teacher, this being his first effort, and that his employers were satisfied with him is evident from the fact that they secured his services one month after the first contract had expired.

## DISTRICT No. 16—COVENTRY VILLAGE.

Miss Caroline W. James has taught this school three terms during the year. The school was of moderate size, and the teacher seemed to have gained the confidence and respect of her pupils, conducting the exercises with ease and ability, the scholars manifesting a disposition to be attentive and obedient, generally, and exhibiting in their recitations that degree of promptness and intelligence, which for children of their years—the most of them being young—showed that there had been much skillful training and commendable proficiency made.

## DISTRICT No. 17—TAFTS.

One term of public school was taught in this district by Mr. B. F. Thompson, whose literary qualifications were unexceptionable, and who apparently labored zealously for the best interest of his pupils. But the Committee cannot speak of his school in as favorable terms as they would like to. At the commencement it was visited, when it was found to be quite numerously attended, the greater part of the scholars, however, small and backward, though there were a few adult scholars, who were tolerably well advanced, and seemed anxious to progress. The Committee being unable to visit it at its close, are also unable to speak of its condition.

Another term of three months was taught by Mr. Charles F. Carpenter, a gentleman well known in the town as a competent teacher. But having a large number of small and backward scholars, it seemed very difficult to keep that order, or secure the attention that is desirable. The teacher labored zealously, but owing to irregularity and tardiness in attendance, was unable to bring his school up to that point for which his efforts in most instances would be adequate.

## DISTRICT No. 18—HARRISVILLE.

The teacher of this school has been a member of the Committee for the last three years, thus occupying a position which renders it unnecessary to speak of his qualifications or ability to superintend a school. Suffice it to say that his usual success attended his efforts.

These statements in reference to the condition of the schools have all been made in good faith. It has been our object to give a fair and impartial representation of all the important facts which have come under our notice. But we know that "to err is human," and if anything has been misrepresented, we hope it may be regarded as an error in judgment rather than design.

It cannot be expected, or even deemed necessary in this report, that many suggestions be made, our predecessors having been elaborate and pointed in this respect; and if we should attempt to make many they would be but a reiteration of what has already been made.

We would only say, that, as every district but one is in possession of a good school-house—an indispensable requisite to the carrying out of the design of our school system, and as the State has recently came up so nobly to our aid, by its last appropriation by which the apportionment to each district is materially augmented, being \$39 26 in addition to what has been previously received from all sources, no district by the last apportionment having less than one hundred dollars to expend for the support of a school, it is hoped that a corresponding effort will be made by the people of this town to secure to the rising generation the advantages of a good education, that none but competent teachers will be employed, and that they will have the hearty co-operation of parents and guardians to encourage and assist them in their responsible, yet sublime calling. Then, and not till then, will the object for which common schools were established be accomplished. For this every philanthropist should labor. May the day speedily be ushered in, when these glorious results, to the fullest extent, shall be realized.

Respectfully submitted,

B. V. GALLUP, }  
H. S. VAUGHN, } *Committee.*  
J. B. SCOTT, }

ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
OF THE  
Town of East Greenwich.

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*The School Committee of the Town of East Greenwich respectfully present the following Report of their transactions for the past year :*

The available funds for the support of schools in this town for the past year were as follows :

From the State—usual appropriation,	-	-	\$544 82
“ “ “ Special appropriation,	-	-	196 30
Town appropriation,	-	-	181 60
Registry money,	-	-	139 17

Whole amount,	-	-	-	\$1,061 89
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Which being divided agreeable to the law of the State and the vote of the town, gave to each district the following sum :

To District No. 1,	-	-	\$285 29
“ 2,	-	-	185 19
“ 3,	-	-	198 19
“ 4,	-	-	203 39
“ 5,	-	-	189 09
			<hr/>
			\$961 15

The trustee of the Maxwell fund reported to the Committee, that one dividend, amounting to \$93 75, was due, and payable to his order; and that another of probably the same amount would be payable before the close of the school year.

It was then voted by the Committee that these dividends from the Maxwell fund be divided equally among the scholars, giving to each scholar, according to the returns of last year, about 80 cents; and this is to be appropriated toward the expenses of the summer school. The whole amount, then, of means for the support of public schools in this town for the present year will be \$1,249 39.

Schools have been kept in all the districts, except No. 1, during the summer three months, and in District No. 3, four months, at an average expense of \$14 75 per month. The money for the support of these schools was from last years appropriation.

During the winter schools have been kept in all the districts four months, at an average expense, in Districts Nos. 2, 3, 4 and 5, of \$27 38 per month, including the board of teachers and incidental expenses of the school.

In District No. 1 two schools, one under a female and the other under a male teacher, at a cost of \$68 33 per month, have been kept for four months.

In District No. 2 there is no school-house. The trustee for this district was notified at the meeting of the Committee in October, that unless a proper and convenient room was provided for the school for the coming winter, no bills could be allowed for the expenses of the same. A room was procured and fitted up by the trustee as well as could be done under the circumstances; but it is notoriously unfit for a school-room, and it is highly necessary that a house should be built in this district, and the Committee earnestly recommend the inhabitants to take some steps toward this end as soon as possible.

In District No. 1 the school-house is wholly inadequate to the accommodation of the district, the location is bad and some action is imperatively called for from the inhabitants, toward providing a suitable house for the accommodation of all the children of the district: or, if affairs remain in the same state that they are now, the Committee will be compelled to disapprove of the present building, and withhold their portion of the public money.

The school-houses in Districts Nos. 3 and 4 need repair and enlargement, and the trustees are requested to bring the matter before the people in their district meetings.

In District No. 5 the school-house is in better condition than those in the other districts, yet some enlargement is required here. Although this school has been under the management of a female teacher, both

winter and summer, for a number of years, it will, we think, compare very favorably with any other in the town.

All of which is respectfully submitted by the Committee.

THOMAS G. FRY, *Chairman*.

JAMES H. ELDREDGE, *Clerk*.

To the citizens of the town of East Greenwich, May Town Meeting,  
1855.

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WEST GREENWICH—NO REPORT.



# R E P O R T

OF THE

## SCHOOL COMMITTEE

OF THE

### TOWN OF BRISTOL.

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SCHOOL COMMITTEE OF THE TOWN FOR THE YEAR.

North District,—GEORGE C. HATCH.

N. E.      “      LEONARD WRIGHT.

Middle    “      { WM. MANCHESTER,  
                         { BENJAMIN PITMAN,  
                         { STEPHEN T. CHURCH.

South      “      { I. N. HOBART,  
                         { JOHN ADAMS,  
                         { JONA. D. WALDRON,  
                         { WILLIAM PAUL,  
                         { WM. L. PECKHAM,  
                         { JOHN B. MUNRO,  
                         { JOHN H. PITMAN.

I. N. HOBART, *Chairman.*

JONA. D. WALDRON, *Secretary.*

GEORGE B. MUNRO, *Superintendent.*

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*In submitting their Annual Report, your Committee ask attention :—*

1.—TO THE STATE OF THE SCHOOLS.

THE HIGH SCHOOL.

N. B. Cook, A. M., Principal; Miss Ellen A. Eddy, Assistant.

The following studies have been pursued :

By the Junior Class,	{	Arithmetic, General History, Analysis and Composition of Sentences. Zoology.
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By the Middle Class.	{ Algebra, Natural Philosophy with Experiments, Book-keeping.
By the Senior Class,	{ Astronomy, Physiology, Moral Science, Rhetoric.
By all the Classes,	{ Composition, Reading, Declamation, Penmanship.
Optional,	{ Latin, Greek,

Under the direction of a principal of approved ability and fidelity, and by an assistant of established reputation, as a successful teacher, the school has been in a highly prosperous condition.

The number of pupils that have enjoyed its advantages is greater than of any previous year, though the average attendance is a fraction less than last year.

The government of the school is mild, yet firm and decided. The instruction is thorough—not surpassed, it is believed, by any school in New England—and the course of study as comprehensive as that pursued in our best Academies.

To parents desiring the thorough intellectual culture of their children, and their moral improvement, there are here offered opportunities abundantly excelled.

Our Committee are of the opinion that these opportunities are better appreciated, from year to year, and that there is an increasing disposition, among the people, to improve them.

#### FIRST GRAMMAR SCHOOL.

Mr. Ezekiel Rich, Principal; Miss Hannah Easterbrooks, Assistant.

The studies pursued are as follows :

Orthography,	Reading,
Penmanship,	Geography,
Arithmetic,	Grammar,
History of the U. S.	Composition of Sentences,
	Declamation.

At the commencement of the year, Mr. Ezekiel Rich, a gentleman well known to some of your Committee, as a popular teacher, and a thorough disciplinarian, was appointed to the office of principal in this school. The high reputation brought with him was fully sustained.—Under his management, with an assistant, tried, and faithful in the discharge of her duties, the school was eminently successful during the

first three terms, when the health of the teacher so far declined as to make his resignation imperative.

After various unsuccessful attempts to procure a teacher suited to the position, your Committee decided to unite the two Grammar Schools, and employ an additional female assistant. The school has, therefore, for the last term of the year, been under the direction of Mr. Aaron Porter, assisted by Miss H. Easterbrooks and Miss Aphia Adams.

However high a place this school has held in the public estimation, it has never been more successful, nor more deserving of confidence and commendation, than during this year.

### SECOND GRAMMAR SCHOOL.

**Mr. Aaron Porter, Teacher.**

The course of study has been the same as in the First Grammar School.

This School, established during the previous year, under many unfavorable circumstances, has more than met the expectations of your committee. The teacher has a keen sense of what is proper in the school room, and has sought untiringly to attain it. He understands his own duties, and has performed them with commendable success. That he has been successful too, in awakening an interest in the minds of his pupils, in the studies pursued, has been repeatedly demonstrated at the quarterly examinations. Your committee think it due, both to the teacher and the scholars, to say, that for accuracy, distinctness of apprehension, and readiness in answering questions that relate immediately to the studies pursued, this school has been second to none in the town.

Its whole course has been one of gratifying progress.

### INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL.

**Miss Mary A. Bourn, Principal ; Miss Emily L. Adams, Assistant.**

Instruction has been given, during the year, as follows :

In Orthography,	Reading,
Penmanship,	Geography,
Mental and Written Arithmetic.	

The teachers in this school have been too long tried, and are too well known, to need any commendation. They have met and performed the arduous duties of the year with the same energy, patience and perseverance, that has heretofore distinguished them. Nor have they been less successful than before. Order has pervaded the school room, and habits of study have been formed in many young minds, that will be of the highest importance in their future studies. In the course of instruction as now marked out for our schools, this school holds an important place, and performs well the duties assigned it.

## WOOD STREET SCHOOL.

Miss Susan M. Green, Teacher.

In this school instruction is given in—

Orthography,	Reading,
Penmanship,	Geography,
Grammar,	Arithmetic,
History of the U. S.	

Through the patient and trying labors of the teacher, it is believed that all the children, for whose special benefit this school was established, have been gathered into and enjoyed, for a part of the time at least, the instruction it affords.

Among the parents a still deeper interest, in relation to the education of their children, has been excited. Most of them now cheerfully co-operate with the committee and the teacher, in the efforts made to qualify their children for stations of usefulness and respectability.

That part of our population for whose advantage this school is sustained—without cost to themselves—has a just claim to our sympathies, and our efforts for their improvement. The circumstances under which they are placed are unfavorable to self-elevation, and suited to crush all laudable ambition, and every feeling that prompts one to aspire for a better condition. Thus circumstanced, they claim at our hand what they cannot procure for themselves. And your committee take pleasure in saying that the efforts made have already met a rich return, which encourages them to recommend further expenditure for this school.

There are three Primary Schools, known as the North, South and Central.

The course of instruction marked out for these schools is as follows :

Orthography,	Reading,
Primary Geography,	Mental Arithmetic.

## NORTH PRIMARY SCHOOL.

Miss M. A. Wardwell, Principal; Miss M. A. Bennett, Assistant.

## SOUTH PRIMARY SCHOOL.

Mrs. P. A. Richmond, Principal; Miss M. A. Bradford, Assistant, for the first two terms, and Miss Abby D. Monroe, for the last two.

## CENTRAL PRIMARY SCHOOL.

Miss M. D. Wyatt, Teacher.

These schools have all moved on through the year, under the instruction of competent, and—excepting the assistant for the last two terms,

in the second primary school—experienced teachers. This assistant, prior to her appointment, was a member of the senior class in the High School. The appointment, though unexpected, was not undeserved, as is apparent by the manner in which she performs the duties of her new position. The teachers in these schools, your committee take pleasure in saying, appear interested in their work, and are successful in laying the foundation of an education, that will qualify our young men and women for the duties that will hereafter be devolved upon them.

In none of our schools is there a greater trial of patience than in these. The pupils are generally young, and need a constant oversight. Without any, or at best with but little power of self-government, they have constantly to be governed. Being naturally fond of play, they have less relish for study. A situation surrounded with more difficulties, and requiring more patience and more painstaking labor, cannot be easily imagined.

To make these burdens as light, and these labors as agreeable as possible, the parents and guardians of children attending these schools, should readily and constantly second the efforts of the teachers to maintain a proper discipline, and to form those habits that are essential to the future happiness of the child, and the future progress of the scholar.

#### MIDDLE DISTRICT.

Mr. J. C. Rich, Principal; Miss Usher, Assistant.

Instruction has been given in

Orthography,	Reading,
Penmanship,	Geography,
Arithmetic,	Grammar,
Natural Philosophy,	Drawing,
Composition,	Declamation.

From long connection with this school, as teacher, the principal has peculiar advantages. A large number of the scholars have had no other teacher. He has trained them, formed their habits of study, and made them such scholars as they are. And well do the results attest his success. The school is well governed, and well instructed, and holds a place among the best schools in the country. The large increase of scholars has made it necessary to employ an assistant for the last two terms of the year. The assistant is a former pupil of the school, and is now doing good service as a teacher.

#### NORTH EAST DISTRICT.

Mr. Lyman B. Hatch, Teacher.

he studies that have been pursued are

Orthography,	Reading,
Penmanship,	Geography,
Grammar,	History of the U. S.

Book-keeping.

good degree of success has attended the labors of the teacher. progress of many of the pupils has been seriously interrupted by gularity in attendance—an evil from which all our scholars suffer in eater or less degree taking due allowance for this, quite as much progress has been le as could be expected.

#### NORTH DISTRICT.

Mr. J. I. Gorton, Teacher.

he studies have been as follows :

Orthography,	Reading,
Penmanship,	Geography,
Grammar,	Arithmetic,
Composition,	Drawing.

his is a small school, made up, in the main, of young scholars.— teacher has succeeded in interesting his pupils in their respective lies, and in forming habits of promptness, in recitation. Geography tudied chiefly with the Outline Maps, and there has been evinced a d degree of thoroughness in this interesting branch of an education. school, as a whole, has been in a prosperous condition.

#### POINT PLEASANT.

Miss Harriet Norris, teacher.

nstruction has been given in

Orthography,	Reading,
Penmanship,	Geography,
Arithmetic.	History of the U. S.

This is also a small school, seldom having as many as twenty scholars. der the management of an experienced teacher, it has enjoyed an- er year of prosperity. The scholars have made such improvement vinces the fidelity of the teacher, and the attention of the pupils to studies pursued.

aving noticed each school, by itself, your Committee desire, before ing this part of the report, to express the opinion that your public ools have never enjoyed a year of more uninterrupted prosperity, and e never been in a better condition. With teachers, in all respects al to those now employed, and the continued fostering care of the

town, there is an open way before our schools to as high a position as can be attained by any in New England.

In thus speaking, your Committee do not intend to intimate that the teachers employed cannot still improve themselves, for the duties of their profession. There is unquestionably an opportunity for further improvement. None is yet perfect. Nor does your Committee intend to intimate that the high position indicated can be attained without increased expenditures for educational purposes. There will be, with the increase of our population, and the spirit of improvement that is beginning to manifest itself among us, increasing demand for the means of public instruction. These means must be supplied, if we would not interpose an insuperable barrier to our general prosperity.

### COURSE OF INSTRUCTION.

2. Your Committee next ask attention to the Course of Instruction that has been pursued in our schools. Its general design is to take the child acquainted with the alphabet, and give it such an education as will qualify it for the ordinary business transactions of life, and the duties of a Republican citizen, for the office of a teacher in our public schools, or to prosecute successfully, the course of studies prescribed in our Colleges and other seminaries of learning. How successfully this Course of Instruction is to be carried out, depends largely upon its beginning. A mistake here must be felt through the whole course. Special care must, then, be given to our *Primary Schools*. No scholar should be allowed to leave these schools till well prepared for the next more advanced. The instruction here must be thorough and complete, or the scholar will pursue the remainder of the course under many disadvantages. This remark will apply with equal force to the Intermediate and Grammar Schools. The desire manifested by both parents and children, for the admission of the latter to the High School, may be a laudable one; but without a suitable preparation, it will be but of little advantage to the scholar, and will reflect but little credit to the parent.

Your Committee invite attention to the following remarks relative to this subject, from the Principal of the High Schools:

"A very serious defect, and one which greatly impedes the progress of our scholars after they enter the High School, is the want of previous thorough mathematical training. The remedy for this defect is not to put the children to the study of Arithmetic at an earlier age; for the tendency is already in favor of tasking their minds too young. And arithmetic, of all studies, should not be forced upon a child at a very early age. But probably no remedy would prove so efficacious as a more extended course, at the proper age, of *Mental Arithmetic*. Such a

book as Colburn's First Lessons is invaluable for this purpose. If our children could be carried thoroughly *through* that work, instead of being hurried into the larger books for the sake of the "ciphering," they would make more real progress, and would acquire a power of arithmetical analysis and ready solution of arithmetical questions which would be of far more value to them than double the time spent in "ciphering." Besides, any time supposed to be lost while dwelling upon Mental Arithmetic, would be more than regained afterwards by the additional rapidity and thoroughness they would thus secure in the more advanced studies. Probably no other improvement so easily made, would produce a result so marked and so salutary through all the ensuing stages of the pupil's course."

### SCHOOL ACCOMMODATIONS.

3. By a vote of the town the question of providing better accommodations for the school in the Middle District was submitted to your Committee. Acting under the authority given, a sub-committee, consisting of Messrs. Church, Manchester, B. Pitman, and J. M. Gooding, was appointed, with power to make such alteration in, or addition to, the house, as was demanded by the increasing population of the district. They have attended to the duty assigned them, and will report to the town. In this connection it is proper to say, that the house has been so altered as to furnish ample accommodations for more than a hundred scholars. And your Committee take pleasure in saying that the new room, which will seat fifty scholars, is not surpassed, in respect to its arrangement, by any school-room in the State.

The whole house, both its exterior and interior, is an honor to the town, and reflects much credit to the good sense, and the taste of the gentlemen who superintended its alteration.

But the work of improvement in our school accommodation is only just begun.

The Wood Street School very much needs a more convenient room. As is well known to the town, the room this school occupies was *never* designed for school purposes. Nor can it be so altered as to render it suitable for a school, without making it unsuitable for a house of worship—for which it was originally erected, and is still used. Besides, in the severe weather of winter, it is impossible, by any ordinary means, to keep the room comfortably warm.

Your Committee therefore earnestly recommend that a new house, suited to school purposes, be erected at an early day, for the accommodation of this school. Similar remarks may be made relative to the room occupied by our Central Primary School. It is wholly unfit for a public school, and has been, and still is, occupied only because your



Committee can find no other place, centrally located, that is as good.— Without better school-rooms, both these schools must be carried forward at a great disadvantage.

#### APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE ENSUING YEAR.

4. In calling attention to this subject your Committee would say, that the appropriations of the last year have been expended as economically as seemed compatible with the highest welfare of the schools. Stinted appropriations can result only in meagre success ; while liberal appropriations, we may expect, will be followed by large success. Grateful for the past, and confident that the town will hereafter see its reward, in the greater intelligence, virtue and enterprise of the people, your Committee ask a slightly increased appropriation for the year to come.— With increasing business, and the prospects of a still greater increase, it cannot be deemed unreasonable to ask and expect enlarged appropriations for the intellectual and moral improvement of those who are soon to manage the business, and shape the destiny of the town. It is ours to sow, for others to reap. And what is sown in the present will be reaped in the future. Posterity will be as intelligent, and virtuous, and happy as it can with the means we provide. At the foundation of all financial and social prosperity, is the intelligence and virtue of the people ; and these depend largely upon our public schools. Let these be generously sustained, in the spirit in which they were founded, and we have little to fear, and much to hope, *for* and *from* the future.

Your Committee therefore respectfully ask an appropriation of Forty Two Hundred Dollars for the ensuing year.

I. N. HOBART, *Chairman*.

JONA. D. WALDRON, *Secretary*.

## FINANCES.

*Expenditures for the year, as follows :*

## SOUTH DISTRICT.

1014 Children between 4 and 16 years according to the Census taken in the year 1850.

Average expense for child in the district this year, \$3 68  
Expense for child on Average Register No. - - 6 79

High School,	-	-	-	-	\$962 76
1st Grammar School,	-	-	-	-	817 78
2d " "	-	-	-	-	354 50
Intermediate " "	-	-	-	-	450 00
Wood Street "—teacher's salary,	\$243	75			} 287 75
Expenses,	44	00			
North Primary " "	-	-	-	-	350 00
Center Primary School,	-	-	-	-	175 00
South Primary " "	-	-	-	-	337 50
					————\$3735 29

## MIDDLE DISTRICT.

125 Children; Average Expense for child \$5 10.

Expense per child on Average Register No.,  
\$7 87.

Grammar School,	-	-	-	-	\$513 00
Point Pleasant School,	-	-	-	-	125 00
					————\$638 00

## N. E. DISTRICT.

50 Children; Average Expense each \$6 00.

Expense per child on Average Register No.,  
\$10 00,

Grammar School,	-	-	-	-	\$300 00
-----------------	---	---	---	---	----------

## NORTH DISTRICT.

63 Children; Average Expense each, \$5 17.

Expense per child on Average Register No.,  
\$11 60.

Grammar School,	-	-	-	-	\$325 00
					————\$625 00

---

\$4,998 29

1252 Children between 4 and 16 years.

Average Expense each \$3 99.

Carried forward,	-	-	-	-	-	\$4,998 29
------------------	---	---	---	---	---	------------

Brought forward,	- - - - -	\$4,998 92
Examining Committee and Superintendent,	-	\$200 00
Paid for Rent of Rooms,	- - - - -	85 00
Repairs, Stoves and pipe, and Contingent Expense,		179 29
		<hr/> \$5,462 58

*Receipts.*

1854, May.

By balance of Register Tax on hand at the close of last year.	- - -	\$ 2 56
" Received from State,	- - -	1,237 90
" " from Town,	- - -	3,800 00
" " Dividends from Banks,	-	143 20
" " Rent of Market House,	-	25 50
" " Land Rents and Interest,		127 82
" " due March 25th, 1855,	-	194 93
		<hr/> \$5,531 91

TABLE No. 1.—Showing the Attendance at each School through the year.

SCHOOLS.	1st Term.			2d Term.			3d Term.			4th Term.			Average registered for the year.	Average attendance for the year.	Gain or loss registered as compared with the previous year.													
	Males.	Females.	Total.	Average.	Per cent. Attendance.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Average.	Per cent. Attendance.	Males.	Females.				Total.	Average.	Per cent. Attendance.										
High School,	21	26	47	43	91.5	17	32	49	41	83.7	12	31	43	36	83.7	19	40	59	45	76.2	49	1-2	41	1-4	1-4	gain.		
1st Grammar School,	54	49	103	91	88.3	41	39	80	66	82.5	34	32	66	59	89.4	42	42	84	76	79.3	83	1-4	73	32	1-4	1-4	loss.	
2d " "	32	14	46	34	74	22	14	36	30	83.3	18	15	33	27	82	26	21	47	38	80.9	40	1-2	32	1-4	40	1-2	gain.	
Intermediate	41	53	96	82	86.5	49	54	103	81	78.6	50	50	100	90	90	59	45	104	90	86.5	100	3-4	85	3-4	4	1-4	loss.	
Central Primary	24	28	52	49	94.2	24	27	51	43	84.3	26	28	54	47	87	24	25	49	42	85.7	51	1-2	45	1-4	6	1-4	loss.	
South " "	55	38	93	70	75.3	54	41	95	76	80	50	44	103	90	87.3	51	41	92	76	82.6	95	3-4	78	1-4	10	1-2	loss.	
North " "	56	25	81	72	88.9	55	31	86	72	83.7	59	41	100	86	86	54	31	85	79	83	88	3-4	77	1-4	4	1-2	gain.	
Wood Street	12	29	41	33	80.5	8	34	42	33	78.5	9	33	42	33	78.5	14	29	43	36	83.7	42	3-4	63	3-4	8	3-4	gain.	
Middle District	35	22	57	48	84.2	22	37	59	52	88.1	20	35	55	47	85.4	46	38	84	74	88	63	3-4	65	1-4	7	1-2	loss.	
North " "	22	14	36	28	77.8	14	12	26	20	76.9	12	11	23	18	78.2	17	8	25	19	76	27	1-2	21	1-4	7	1-2	loss.	
N.E. " "	23	8	31	22	71	14	14	28	20	71.4	16	13	29	23	79.3	24	9	33	27	82	30	1-4	23	1-2	2	1-4	gain.	
Point Pleasant	17	3	20	16	80	11	4	15	8	53.3	14	2	16	12	75	12	5	17	12	70.5	17	1-2	12	1-4	2	1-4	gain.	
Totals,	392	311	703	588	82.2	331	339	670	542	80.9	329	335	664	478	72	388	334	722	614	85.6	689	3-4	578	18	1-4	18	1-4	gain.

# REPORT

OF THE

## SCHOOL COMMITTEE

OF THE

### TOWN OF WARREN.

---

The Public School Committee respectfully submit the following report:

A meeting for their organization was held April 29th, when Thomas P. Moore was elected Chairman, and N. P. Smith, Secretary.

The amount of funds subject to orders for school purposes, was \$2,582 30; derived from the following sources, viz.:

Balance of last report,	-	-	-	-	\$	113	41
Received from the State,	-	-	-	-		701	09
Appropriated by the the town,	-	-	-	-		1700	00
Received from Registry Tax,	-	-	-	-		56	05
"    for tuition,	-	-	-	-		11	75
							\$2,582 30

Of this amount \$2,094 62 have been expended in the West District, viz:

For Instruction,	-	-	-	-		\$1,722	48
Fuel,	-	-	-	-	-	195	40
Making fires, and care of house,	-	-	-	-	-	58	51
Printing,	-	-	-	-	-	18	00
Repairs,	-	-	-	-	-	41	54
Incidentals,	-	-	-	-	-	32	72
School apparatus and books,	-	-	-	-	-	25	97
							Total. \$2,094 72

The expenses in the East District have been \$207 00, viz :

For Instruction,	-	-	-	-	-	\$194 00
Fuel,	-	-	-	-	-	13 00
Total,						\$207 00

The amount of expenditures in the North District is \$200 86, viz :

For Instruction,	-	-	-	-	-	\$163 67
Fuel,	-	-	-	-	-	15 00
Repairs,	-	-	-	-	-	15 44
Incidental,	-	-	-	-	-	6 75
Total,						\$200 86

The general expense account is \$3 75, showing a total of expenditures of \$2,506 23, and leaving a balance of \$76 07, at the commencement of the present term.

From the quarterly returns in the West District, the attendance in both departments is shown to have been as follows :

#### SENIOR DEPARTMENT.

First Term—Males 48 ; Females 65 ; total, 113 ; averaging 107.

Second Term—Males 49 ; Females 34 ; total 83 ; averaging 67.

Third Term—Males 62 ; Females 52 ; total 114 ; averaging 107.

Fourth Term—Males 68 ; Females 48 ; total 116 ; averaging 103.

At the present Term there are 66 Males and 59 Females in attendance, classed for daily exercises and recitations in their various studies, as follows, viz :

4 classes in Reading,	110	1 class in Physiology	26
4 " " Spelling,	110	1 " " Natural Philosophy	16
5 " " English Grammar,	90	1 " " Book Keeping,	11
1 " " Geography,	9	3 " " Latin,	37
1 " " History,	42	2 " " Algebra,	26
1 " " U. States,	12	7 " " Arithmetic,	93

A class of 46 attended also to exercises in Composition, every other week ; a class of 23 to Declamation, and a class of 21 to recitations in Poetry.

The following is an abstract from the quarterly returns, showing the attendance in the

#### JUNIOR DEPARTMENT.

First Term—Boys 77 ; Girls 76 ; total 153 ; averaging 134.

Second Term—Boys 78 ; Girls 75 ; total 153 ; averaging 123.

Third Term—Boys 70 ; Girls 83 ; total 153 ; averaging 146.

Fourth Term—Boys 76 ; Girls 79 ; total 155 ; averaging 136.

At the commencement of the present term, a class of the more ad-

vanced pupils were transferred to the Senior Department, leaving 76 boys and 67 girls in attendance on this department of the school.

In the East District the Summer term of four months was kept by Miss Burton, at which 16 boys and 3 girls attended. Mr. P. W. Read was the instructor for the Winter term of 3 1-2 months, and 23 boys and 3 girls were in attendance.

In the North District 12 boys and 18 girls attended the Summer term of 18 weeks, and 23 boys and 14 girls are in attendance on the present term of 19 weeks, which will not close until about the 20th instant. Both terms of this school have been kept by Miss Dorcas D. Stowbridge.

The proceedings of the committee in regard to the change of teachers in the West District were reported to the Special Town Meeting held in August last. These proceedings were then, and are now, regarded as essential to sustain that efficient instruction, order and discipline of the school which had been maintained from its commencement, and without which no school can accomplish the objects for which it is established.

Such being the views of the committee, they greatly regretted the excitement manifested on a subject which should ever be regarded as of the highest interest to our citizens, and which, of all others, should never be suffered to mingle with the strife of politics, or personal competition. But your committee do not consider themselves as responsible for the low intrigue, the absurd exaggerations, and the gross misstatements, by which that excitement was produced; nor have they complied with the resolutions of instruction passed by that meeting, or regarded it as obligatory for them to resign the office to which they had been elected, and the duties of which they had sworn to perform. For a compliance with the first, would not only have implied a virtual confession of having done injustice to others, but would have perpetuated an evil which it was their duty to correct. And to have done the last, would certainly have been an indirect and gratuitous reflection upon the town, for not filling their places with worthier and more competent men.

It would also have been a total surrender of their best judgment and free volition to the dictation of others, for the implied purpose of retaining an office which they never sought; and with the duties of which they should be supposed, perhaps, to be as well acquainted as many of those whose voice cannot be rightly be regarded as so very potential, in matters pertaining to other men's business, while they are either ignorant or negligent of their own.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

THOS. P. MOORE, *Chairman*,

N. P. SMITH, *Secretary*.  
Warren, April 4, 1855.

# REPORT

OF THE

## SCHOOL COMMITTEE

OF THE

### TOWN OF BARRINGTON.

---

*To the Town of Barrington—The School Committee appointed by you a year ago, respectfully report:*

That a school has been taught in the three districts, both Summer and Winter.

In each of them there have been competent and industrious teachers. The order and proficiency manifest in them have been very gratifying. Though there have been less large scholars than in years gone by, yet considering all things, the examinations have been very fair, and left no doubts in the minds of parents and visitors that both teachers and scholars had been engaged in their appropriate work.

The School in District No. 1, in the Summer, was 23 1-2 weeks in length. Whole number of scholars was 25 ; average number, 21.

The whole sum expended for school in the Summer, - \$98 50

The School in this District continued in the Winter 14 weeks. Whole number of scholars, 35 ; average number, 30.

Whole sum expended in the Winter, - - \$85 37

The School in District No. 2 continued 30 weeks in the Summer. Whole number, 27 1-2 ; average number, 25.

Whole sum expended in Summer, - - - \$150 00

The School in this District continued in the Winter 14 weeks. Whole number of scholars, 31 ; average number, 28.

Whole sum expended in Winter School, - - - \$150 00

The School in District No. 3, continued in the Summer, 16 weeks. Whole number of scholars, 29 ; average number, 23.



Whole sum expended for School in Summer, - \$52 00

This School continued in the Winter 12 weeks. Whole number of scholars, 27; average number, 23.

Whole sum expended for School in Winter, incidentals included, \$84 42

The whole sum therefore expended for Schools the past year, is \$620 23

And the whole sum furnished by the Town and State, \$466 23

Your committee recommend that much care and vigilance be used in employing teachers that are well qualified; and that when they are engaged, it shall be understood that teaching is to be their principal business while the school continues.

They also recommend that improvements be made in some of our school houses; and that every laudable measure be taken to increase the interest of the community in the rising character of our schools, and to secure greater means for their successful operation.

All of which is respectfully submitted by the Superintendent, in behalf of the Committee.

FRANCIS WOOD.

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\*.\* The titles of Tables VIII and IX are incorrect in the body of the Report—  
they are corrected in the Index below.

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TWELFTH  
ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE  
Commissioner of Public Schools,  
IN  
RHODE ISLAND.

MADE TO THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY,  
AT ITS  
JANUARY SESSION, A. D. 1857.

BY ROBERT ALLYN,  
COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

PROVIDENCE:  
A. CRAWFORD GREENE & BROTHER, PRINTERS TO THE STATE.  
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# TWELFTH ANNUAL REPORT

## OF THE

### COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

---

#### *To the Honorable General Assembly :*

It affords me a lively pleasure to present to your honorable body my Annual Report on the condition of our Public Schools, both on account of the joy it must give you and every patriotic citizen, to learn that these fountains of much of our prosperity are so well accomplishing their beneficent work ; and, also, on account of the evidence of increasing interest, everywhere in our State, manifested in the fullest development of our school system, and the perfection of its practical operations. No citizen, at all endowed with the common sentiments of patriotism, can be indifferent to this interest, which concerns the whole foundation and superstructure of a commonwealth's intelligence and virtue, as well as its happiness and progress—its peace and stability.

Our own School system is justly regarded as a model in theory ; and, under the direction, the energy and the practical wisdom of the people, is fast proving itself a model in its daily workings. It has shown that it is capable of giving a thorough groundwork, in all the elementary essentials of education, for all the business and all the professions of society. It has proved that it can give a child a more rapid, a better, and a more complete intellectual and moral training, at less cost and with more profit to the whole community, than any other system—whether of select, private, or general charity schools.

It has already, within less than twenty years of its true beginning—though nearly thirty previous years had seen laudable attempts to establish it—gained such a hold on the affections and interests of our citizens, that it has become a matter of just pride ; and its accomplished results not only challenge our admiration, but claim our devout gratitude to those wise men who designed it, and to the Great Author of all wisdom and progress, whose favor has been manifestly upon it.

That it still has defects, is not unlikely. That it can be improved, is quite certain. And that our own zeal, and that of the inhabitants of our several towns, ought to be revived and quickened, needs no proof. We still need to make thorough examination of its principles and constant modes of operation ; and to labor with a more determined spirit to carry forward and to perfect its benevolent designs. It is confidently believed that we shall shrink from no study, and from no toil or expense, deemed necessary for promoting and enlarging the means required to educate all our children ; and that we shall be hindered by no narrow views of temporary expediency or party policy, from following the dictates of wisdom and prudence ; both of which, as well as enlightened patriotism, incite to the improvement of our educational system—the highest interests of a State. Let us attend to a Summary of the Expenses and Statistics of our Public Schools, and, afterwards we shall be better prepared to resume this topic, and consider what can and ought to be done, to make the money spent on Schools pay for a continually growing amount of virtue, intelligence, happiness and prosperity.

#### SUMMARY OF EXPENSES.

1. The amount of money expended by the several towns,  
for the building and repairs of School Houses, is      \$33,084 50  
    An increase over last year of \$17,082 94
2. The amount paid from the General Treasury to the  
several towns, is      \$49,996 38
3. The amount raised by the towns in direct taxation, is      \$79,739 89  
    An increase over last year of \$17,175 00
4. The amount raised in the several towns by Registry  
and Military taxes, is      \$6,521 81  
    A decrease from last year of \$1,401 60
5. The amount raised by the several districts from Rate  
Bills and district taxes, is      \$10,501 70  
    A decrease from last year of \$1,219 41

6. The amount reported as remaining in the Town Treasuries unexpended from last year, is \$5,082 81  
     An increase over last year of \$664 58
7. The total amount of money derived from all sources, and available for the support of Public Schools—exclusive of money raised to build and to repair School Houses, is \$151,842 59  
     An increase over last year of \$13,229 55
- If we include the money raised for the building and repairs of School Houses, the sum total is \$184,927 09  
     An increase of nearly 20 per cent., or \$30,312 69
8. There was actually expended in the several towns for instruction alone, the sum of \$148,346 98  
     An increase over last year of \$16,671 87
- The amount of money voted by the several towns to be raised by direct taxation for the next year, is \$98,597 89  
     An increase over the present year of \$18,858 00  
     And over last year an increase of \$36,033 00

Or more than fifty per cent. in two years! a fact, which—since it is a direct tax voted by the people themselves on their own property—shows, best of all things, the increased estimation in which our Public Schools are held, and the steady determination of all classes of our citizens to improve them.

#### MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES.

1. The amount ordered to be paid for the support of Deaf Mutes at the American Asylum, at Hartford, is \$450 00
- 2 The amount ordered to be paid for the support of the Blind, at the Massachusetts Asylum and Perkins Institution for the Blind—two years' bills—is \$0,733 35.
3. The amount paid for the support of the Idiotic and Feeble minded youth with Dr. Browne of Barre, Mass., is \$100 00
4. The amount paid for Lectures in different parts of the State, is \$367 00
6. The amount paid for Teachers' Institute in Providence is \$300 00
7. The amount paid for the Expenses of the State Normal School in Providence for the year ending Dec. 31, 1856, is \$3,855 04

The amount paid for the support of the Indian School in  
Charlestown, is

\$100 00

### SUMMARY OF STATISTICS.

The present year is the first, in which an attempt has been made to obtain the statistics of both the Summer and the Winter Schools. And the separation of these statistics has, in several towns, made an apparent diminution in the aggregate of scholars returned. It is almost impossible to obtain statistics that are entirely reliable. The State furnishes, gratuitously, Registers for recording the name and exact time of attendance of every scholar entering the schools. The law makes it the teacher's duty, under penalty of a loss of wages, to keep these Registers accurately, and compels the filling of the Returns, and the reporting of these by the Trustees to the School Committees. But in some way or another, Reports on which the Commissioner dare depend implicitly do not, in all cases, come out of the hands of the School Committee. In most cases the gentlemen composing these Committees undoubtedly do the best in their power. But in some cases where the schools are actually and justly called the best, and where their whole operations are best systematized, the reports are absolutely—and that after the Commissioner has returned them and begged for fuller information—good for nothing. There ought to be a remedy for this state of things, but it is believed the law does not make provision for any.

### SUMMER SCHOOLS.

Number of Schools kept, - - - - -	390
Male Teachers, 89. Females, 412. Total, - - - - -	501
Scholars attending, Boys, - - - - -	11.078
Girls, - - - - -	10.968
Whole number, - - - - -	22.046
The average attendance was - - - - -	16.300

This is about 74 per cent., or a loss in Summer, when the weather is most favorable, and among the smaller children whose labor is least profitable, of a little more than one-fourth.

The average time of keeping these schools was seventeen weeks and four days.

The average wages of teachers per month, including board, was  
 For Male Teachers, - - - - - \$34 50 per month.  
 For Females, - - - - - \$20 34 per month.

### WINTER SCHOOLS.

These schools have usually been the only ones reported to the Commissioner, unless where the Summer schools—as they did in some cases—afforded a larger average. It will be seen, on referring to the Table No. III., that no less than twenty school districts had no Winter Schools. A knowledge of this fact, and of this other, that these same districts have heretofore counted their Summer schools in the Returns, will enable us to understand how it happens, that the Tables show a smaller number of scholars in schools, than last year. But if this shall seem to any, at first sight, to show unfavorably for our schools, let him remember that the actual average is, even with this diminished number enrolled, larger than the previous year. This fact shows that those who availed themselves of the advantages of our public schools, were more deeply in earnest than ever before, to derive the largest profit from the State's liberality. And in this connection, it is not improper to say, that the last Winter, on account of its deep and long continuing snows and its extreme cold, was very unfavorable for a regular attendance of the scholars—especially for the smaller children in the country towns.

The number of Winter Schools was - - - - - 457  
 Male Teachers, 270. Females, 311; Total, - - - - 581.  
 Number of Scholars attending, Boys, 14,029  
   Girls, 11,864  
   Whole number, . - - - - 25,893.  
   Less than for last year by 990  
 The average attendance was - - - - - 19,281.  
   Greater than last year by 293

The percentage of attendance is 74 and a very small fraction.

The average time of keeping these Winter Schools was seventeen weeks and three days.

The average wages of teachers per month, including board, was,  
 For Males, - - - - - \$33 34  
 For Females, - - - - - \$21 20

The whole number of School Districts, is 386.

But five of these made no Returns.

The number of School Houses, is 391

The reports made directly to the Commissioner, by the Trustees of the School Districts, without the intervention of the Town Committees, for the Special Report on Truancy and Absence, last May, show better results than these, and better than ever before shown.

According to those Returns, the whole number of children

registered as attending Public Schools was 27,130

Greater than last year by 257

And the average attendance was 19,330

Greater than last year by 332

While it is not possible to say that these numbers are more correct than those sent in by the Committees of the several towns, it is believed that they will more accurately compare with the returns of previous years. And while they indicate an increased attendance, and an increasing average attendance, they do not, it is quite certain, show that these additions are keeping pace with the annual additions to our population by births and immigrations.

#### REMARKS ON THESE STATISTICS.

One fact deserves to be noticed here. The Returns of this and other years, show that the number of boys educated in our schools is considerably larger than the number of girls. In the Summer Schools the numbers were nearly equal—there being 101 boys to every 100 girls. But in the Winter Schools there were 118 boys to every 100 girls. According to the Report on the Registration of Births, the proportion of boys born, to girls born, is 105 boys to 100 girls. We see therefore, that taking our Summer and our Winter Schools together, we educate in the Public Schools about 219 boys to every 200 girls, while the proportion of births is 210 boys to 200 girls.

These facts show one of two things ; either that the number of girls growing up in ignorance in our State, is greater than that of boys by about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. ; or that the number of girls educated in private schools, is greater than that of boys educated in these same private schools. Doubtless there are more girls in private schools ; and this can be accounted for in part by the fact that many parents are willing to send their boys to the common or public schools, who are not willing that their daughters should attend these schools, on account, as they allege, of fears that the manners of public schools will be detrimental

to moral purity and feminine grace and refinement. But it is believed that, while these fears are entertained to some extent, and do operate in many cases, this will not account for the large deficiency of girls at school, and we are therefore forced to conclude, that we are not doing as much for the education of our girls, as for the education of our boys.

### EDUCATION OF GIRLS IMPORTANT.

The education of females is of quite as much importance to the State as is that of males. For from these, we must, as our statistics show, recruit the ranks of our teachers, and from the nature of the case, these females must be the guides and instructors of the earliest and most impressible years, in the life of each person in the coming generation. If the teachers, the nurses and the mothers of any people are ignorant and unrefined, are degraded and vicious, or tending to become so, it is in vain to hope for brave, intelligent, moral, and high minded sons. On the other hand, if the mothers and teachers are learned and virtuous, enlightened and elevated in sentiment, their sons cannot fail, in most instances, to be worthy of the noble women who bore and instructed them. We ought then to give more attention to this subject of the education of girls—especially among the poorer class, and in the country towns; and we should be particularly careful to see that the girls shall not be deprived of their proper share of school privileges, simply because they make better nurses for younger children, or more profitable assistants in the kitchen than boys do; or because it is erroneously taken for granted, that they do not need so good an education, since they are not designed to carry on machine shops, or conduct the barter of trade and commerce, or to manage the affairs of the national administration. They are to bring up and to educate the men of the nation, and to carry on all the complicated and beneficial operations of our households, and these very necessary and important affairs require not only skill and common sense, but also education and discipline. Let the girls be educated, therefore, quite as numerously and as thorough in our schools as the boys, if we would derive the largest profit from our system of public instruction.

But if the fears of some are in any degree well grounded, that our schools are at all inimical to feminine grace and refinement in manners, or to purity of morals, it is high time that we had earnestly set about the work of making them patterns of virtue, models of refined gentility, and fountains of genuine good breeding, as they now, in many cases



are, and in all cases are fast becoming models of all accurate and ~~real~~ scholarship. Not long ago it was said that the schools of the people—promiscuous gatherings of children of all classes—could not be made to be equal in accurate knowledge of the studies gone over, nor in ready tact and skill in school work, to the private and select schools established by munificent charitable donations, and attended by a privileged class of children; that the offspring of parents compelled by necessity to manual toil, and often stung by poverty, could not be made, in schools supported by universal taxation—and therefore dependent for their very existence on the whims of a hundred or a thousand ignorant voters—to embrace the principles of knowledge, nor to receive that discipline of mind which the children of the wealthy must have, and can easily procure by means of their wealth. It was said that the same school—and that a public one—could never educate together a class of gentlemen's sons, destined to lives of leisure and literary pursuits, and a class of laborers' sons, destined to lives of toil and mechanical labor. But how soon and how completely has practice overthrown this favorite objection to a system of common or public schools? How triumphantly has it proved that such schools can be better nurseries of brave men, and can give a better education than any private school, no matter how abundant may be its funds, nor how able its instructors, nor how select and high bred its pupils? And how satisfactorily, too, has this experiment demonstrated that the poor can, by some sacrifices, yet without any insuperable difficulty, keep their children continuously at school, by the side of the offspring of the rich; and that the former can as easily outstrip the latter in learning and in discipline, as they can excel them in honorable labor or in athletic sports.

Thus have we found that our public schools can easily be made to be none too poor for the instruction—in the most profitable manner—of the favored offspring of the refined and cultivated, and none too good for the practical and thorough education of the children of laborers and poor men. And it only remains that we push the experiment one degree further, and show by it that these public schools may be made such model seminaries of politeness and good manners, that they shall be as well fitted to educate girls to be refined and modest, pure and gentle, as they are to train boys to habits of energy and accuracy. That this is possible cannot be doubted by one who has seen how much has already been accomplished. With public opinion directed to this object, and teachers of the right stamp, this very desirable state may be soon reached.

## SCHOOL HOUSES.

It must, however, be acknowledged that these statistics are in most respects highly gratifying. The liberal sums raised for the repair and building of school houses, speak of a permanent interest in public education, and a determination to do annually more and more for this good cause. For the erection of a larger, a more commodious, or a more elegant school house does of necessity, draw after it a larger appropriation to hire better teachers, and to keep the school open a longer period. And this disposition of the people themselves, in these smallest of all self-governing municipalities—the school districts—to impose on their own property, by their own motion and vote, these taxes—the largest and most onerous of all public contributions—for an expense which entails almost inevitably an increasing tax, is the best evidence that the public school has become a part of the life of our commonwealth, and can only die or disappear, when the sleep of death wraps the State herself in forgetfulness.

But while there has been a marked advance in the work of school-house building, there has been too little attention paid to ornamenting the grounds about them. There is no reason why a neat school-house with an ample yard in front, and a play-ground in the rear, should not be shaded with trees, and surrounded with ornamental shrubbery. If such a house is worth building, certainly it is worthy of an appropriate adornment. And what can be better calculated to make school an honored place, than to embower it among those glories of the first Paradise, foliage and flowers, at once so refreshing and exalting to look upon, so attractive to birds of beauty and song, and so suggestive of that coming better day, when deserts shall blossom as the rose. Truly here is a work for every member of a neighborhood, whether trustee or otherwise. And it is a work that hardly need cost a dollar in cash. A few of the sapling elms or maples, springing up by the side of neglected fences close by the school-house itself, might be easily and safely transplanted to the yard in front and the ground in rear, and, if once well planted, man need care for their protection no more. God will send the life-giving sunshine, the nourishing rains, and the strengthening airs, to make them grow grandly from year to year, till centuries at length shall look down from their worshipping tops, and bless with the benedictions of the fathers, the revering generations who shall sport and study beneath them. Half a dozen

fathers, with the older boys, would, in a spring forenoon, accomplish forever a work, which should live and breathe beauty and improvement, over the whole region round about for ages to come. And the mothers and daughters, who would waste an afternoon in sewing-circle gossip, might adorn a parterre on the school lawn, that should cause every passer-by to thank them, and every school-goer to grow up into the love of rural peace and comfort. There is small excuse for neglecting this good work around our schools.

In our State we probably have more beautifully located and tastefully built school houses, than in any other State of its size. The stranger traveling over our hills, finds them on the gentle slope of a hill, on the border of a lovely grove, or beneath the shade of a noble rock or cliff, and all that is wanting to complete a picture to ravish the heart of a painter, is a few of our graceful elms or luxuriant maples, to overshadow and smile upon the shrine of learning and good will which the school house always seems.

### TOWN APPROPRIATIONS.

The uniform, and of late munificent, enlargement of the sums voted by the several towns from their own treasuries, speaks the same language, and adds also to the hope that the day is approaching when every town shall tax its property for the whole expenses of its schools, and give to its School Committee the entire management of them—the hiring, and paying of the teachers, as well as a more efficient control and supervision of them by superintendent or otherwise. It should be observed that while two towns—New Shoreham and Charlestown—have diminished their own appropriations, the largest increase is in those Cities and towns that entirely discard the district system, and employ superintendents for all their schools—as in Providence, Newport, Warren and Bristol.

This liberal addition to the town appropriations is most certainly the noblest and most satisfactory evidence of the politic wisdom of our citizens. It proves that they are aware of the vast importance of elementary education at home, and almost by the fireside, and that they have fixed it as a principle strong as life itself, that whatever other interests they neglect, the school shall not be one. This is an omen of great promise, and should be an occasion of great joy and profound thankfulness, to all lovers of learning and its almost consequent virtue. It is here alluded to with a pride, well founded in the nature of

things, and is regarded as the best evidence of the good already accomplished, and the surest pledge of the faithful performance of all social duties.

### CHILDREN ABSENT FROM SCHOOLS.

But while we justly congratulate ourselves on our well-doing in the pecuniary support of our public schools, we must remember that paying tithes of all we possess, and being grateful that our advantages are not like those of others, will never avail instead of the active discharge of daily duty. Are we not most visibly neglecting our duty, while we are allowing the number of scholars sent to schools either to diminish, or at best to remain merely stationary? In 1851—the first authentic report of the number of pupils registered and attending—there were only 1,250 less than this year; while in 1852, there were more by 761! Do not these facts speak with an eloquence more potent than the tongue of the orator or the pen of the writer, and tell us of the direction in which our danger lies? The numbers of our children are annually increasing; while those of them that we are educating are actually diminishing; and at the same time the burdens of our taxation for their education are rapidly accumulating, having gone up during the period above named, from \$125,070 91, to \$184,927 09, an increase of almost 42 per cent.; while the decrease in scholars actually enrolled is, since 1852, three per cent., and the decrease in the average attendance is two per cent. The increase of our population during this period of six years, must have been not less than seven per cent., and the growth of numbers in our schools ought to have been much larger than the growth of our population.

An enumeration of our school population, made last May under Resolution of the General Assembly, shows that about twenty-two per cent. of the children in our State, between the ages of six and fifteen, are not attending school; but are growing up in ignorance, subject to all its crushing disabilities, and exposed to all its appalling dangers. Here certainly is a field for labor, and ample opportunity to win trophies to our benevolence, quite as noble, and far more enduring, than we can erect in our note-worthy school houses. For if the erection and adornment of a school house, and the doubling of our voluntary taxation for its maintainance, are acts worthy of commendation, then surely the causing of the walks thither, and the aisles of that school to be thronged with inquisitive, willing-minded, simple-

hearted childhood, eager to learn and prepared to more than profit—to live—by such instruction, is a work deserving of far higher praise, inasmuch as it accomplishes a far more durable and influential result. Public opinion must be directed to this topic for reflection and discussion, and our citizens must be induced to give time and thought to the means of securing the attendance of all the commonwealth's precious offspring at the public schools. The Special Report on Truancy and Absence made by the Commissioner, at the May Session of the General Assembly, and then ordered to be printed, embodies many facts and much reasoning, believed to be sound, in regard to these matters. It was made up in great haste, and might have been much better ; but it calls attention to the most important subject that can engage our study and our zeal.

#### CAUSES OF THIS INCREASED ABSENCE.

While it is comparatively easy to account for this increase in the proportionate amount of children absent from our public schools, the very facts, which afford the explanation of the apparent retrogression, do really accumulate difficulties upon the hands of those who labor to cure the evils complained of.

Until within a very few years, our population was almost entirely of New England origin. We were a people—though Rhode Island had not at that time all the *forms* of that system,—into whose very bodies and souls two hundred years' enjoyment of free speech, free voting, and free schools, had ingrained, both the love for knowledge and culture, and the determination, no matter what obstacles were to be encountered, to obtain and to profit by the acquisition of that knowledge, and to improve under that culture. Then it was, in our State, that in the sparsely populated towns, *the school went round from house to house*, during successive Winters and Summers. True the masters were not remarkable for either knowledge or talents, and some certainly not for moral excellence or good breeding. But so eager were our people that their children should be better educated than themselves had been, that they made greater sacrifices by far than there is now occasion for them to make. They felt that necessity was laid upon them to have the School and the Schoolmaster, and they all set about the work. Then almost every man and woman, was a New Englander, and was born with an innate love of education at school, that even pinching

poverty, debasing vice and soul-shriveling avarice could scarcely diminish, and never destroy.

But in the days since those good times—good they were, though far inferior to ours—an unparalleled demand for labor, and the afflictions sent by a Divine Providence on another land, have forced upon us the solution of one of the most momentous and interesting problems ever presented in the history of a nation. Another nation—not as in olden times the Scandinavian hordes moved in masses for conquest and plunder—but singly and peacefully—has stolen in upon us, and now they form a portion of our population, respectable from other considerations than that of mere numbers. These adopted citizens are ignorant of almost all book learning, from simple necessity; and consequently have comparatively little appreciation of, and desire for even elementary education, much less are they able to comprehend the sacrifices required in order to obtain its blessings for their children. Besides, they are, or at least many of them are, from principle, opposed to learning, in many of its branches, holding that religion may possibly receive some damage from an increase of knowledge. They are, moreover, a people who had been defrauded of any just division of the fruits of their own labor, by those who ought to have been their brethren, and afterwards by the visitations of famine were reduced to the verge of ruin. They therefore came among us steeped in poverty, and consequently were goaded by the desires for bodily subsistence—those first and keenest wants that man can feel, until he has been greatly raised in intellectual or in moral activity. Though poor, and thus heavily pressed by these first wants of nature, they are nevertheless frugal, thrifty, industrious and desirous of improvement. Their patient labor has already added to the productiveness of our capital, and contributed vastly to our comfort. And now the problem for solution is how to educate these and their children, so as to incorporate them, and make them an integrant part of a homogeneous community. It cannot be done by sectarian proselytism; for under our laws their mode of belief is as good as any in the land. It cannot be done by the intercourse of common labor; for here the tendencies are to introduce the distinctions of caste. We must not wait for their vices, born in poverty and likely to be increased by avarice and demagoguism, to reduce us and them to one common level of homogeneous corruption. Nothing but a common education, imbued with the principles of divine morality, freed from all sectarian domincering, and all party interference, while it maintains its own right to instruct in morality and virtue, can accomplish this work, so essential to our sta-

bility and continued advance in all that constitutes the glory of a State.

This portion of our community is even now, notwithstanding their unfortunate antecedents, beginning to understand the advantages that education confers, and, with but few exceptions, they are willing to receive at our hands a participation in our privileges.

It is from this class of citizens that the absentees mostly come; and it is here that we find the great part of our labor. How can we bring them into our schools? And in order to do this, we must in the very beginning remember that it will not answer to lower the standard of our school education or morality, or to abate from our system one thing deemed and found to be essential. Whatever belongs to the school, as an element necessary, either to its existence, or to its best prosperity; must be held and carried forward toward perfection. But every thing not essential, may safely be left out or suffered to drop into disuse. It is believed that our school laws and usages are such, as no enlightened, conscientious person can object to. Sectarian instructions or exercises are not admitted. Moral instruction, both by the example and precepts of the teachers, is demanded. The great duties of love and reverence toward God; honesty, virtue, justice, truth, and benevolence towards man; temperance, frugality, industry and self respect in regard to ourselves, must be inculcated. And all this, while the great business of the school is to prepare the child, by intellectual discipline and stimulus, to appreciate the moral and religious precepts of the parent, the denominational literature, and the teachings of the church, after he goes out of the school.

Such being the theory and practice of our schools on this sometimes vexing question, of "religion in schools"—though commonly erroneously so termed—that every thing—and nothing other—essential to a school, established and supported by a christian people, shall be taught or required, as a requisite for admission and continuance in them, we may, with reason, expect them to educate every one of our children; and may we not with confidence demand so much as this, and insist that every child whom God's good Providence gives to us as a boon of love, shall be educated as much as though he were in these schools? How to accomplish this is not for any one man to say. The general intercourse and business in any community will suggest many ways of persuasion and influence; and the practical application of that Golden Rule of our blessed religion will teach us how to complete the work. Only let the people feel the necessity for a given work, and conversation, discussion, and wise reflection will find both

the way and means to perform it. For this reason, the Commissioner considered it his duty to make some allusion to this matter at once, so fruitful of alarm, and so full of promise of good. It is hoped that all our philanthropic citizens will remember that no form of law—however prudently and rigidly enforced and executed—can do all that is needed here. There must be a persuasive influence, personally brought to bear on individuals, and acting to create the necessity for, and the power to execute the salutary mandates of the community—whether expressed, or not expressed, in statute law—that every child shall enjoy the right to that common and universal inheritance of all child-residents of New England—a good education in all the elements of knowledge.

#### THE PROPER CURE FOR THESE EVILS.

And we need not become impatient and restless, or give way at all to despair and gloomy forebodings, if our statistics do show for a time an apparent increase of ignorance among us. We know well the causes that have produced, or rather imported it, within our borders. We know the localities in which it has fixed its abode. We know, also, that all the instincts of humanity, aided by a wholesome ambition to thrive, tend to remove this ignorance. Neither must we forget that in order to fully appreciate the worth of knowledge, intelligence or education, something must be known, not only of the actual power which these give, but also of the joy and satisfaction, which they afford to the individual possessing them. The pecuniary value of a good education is a thing to be observed, and any one, however ignorant he may be, and however he may have been habituated to despise knowledge, must at once, in our community, be made to notice how greatly learning increases the chances of business thrift and social elevation. This obvious fact cannot escape the attention of any person with either eyes or ears. But to appreciate the high and refined pleasures of knowledge, and to understand the diviner joys of virtue, requires not observation so much as experience—not so much ears and eyes—not so much nerves and senses—as a certain prepared state of mind and soul, a certain inner sense of heart and life, induced by some personal acts done, or by some previously tasted and enjoyed delights.

While we seek to enforce the provisions of our School Law, relating to children absent from school and growing up in ignorance, we must by no means neglect to set forth constantly the excellency of knowl-



edge, and the power which necessarily accompanies it. This may be done in our current conversation and intercourse with those whose children ought to attend the schools, and by securing the delivery of lectures or addresses on the importance of education and punctual attendance at school, and by doing all that is needed by way of charity sometimes, and simple encouragement at others. In the cities and large villages—especially the manufacturing places—capitalists and those employing a number of men and women would, in the long run, find it for their pecuniary interest not only not to employ children of the school age, and therefore “due at the schools,” during such times as the annual Summer and Winter schools are kept, but resolutely to insist that every child of such age shall attend the public school for at least four or five months in the year. A law now on the statute book demands this; but manufacturers—often urged contrary to their better judgment and determination by the parents of the child so sinned against—do not fully comply with it. It is believed that hardly a capitalist or manufacturing corporation in the State willfully violates this law; but these violations, persuaded by those who ought to be protectors, though they are in reality the oppressors, of their offspring, work just as much injury to the future prosperity of the establishments, as the willful violations could. These owners and their superintendents and overseers might, in their ordinary and daily business intercourse with their operatives, exert a vast influence, and might soon render it extremely unpopular and disgraceful to keep a child or a ward from school, or not to compel him to attend.

There are two or three other agencies which might be set in operation in many of our densely populated localities, and each of which surely promises good results if it is not absolutely a necessity. In the City of Providence, and in many of the larger villages of the State, a new enterprise in the work of education has been more vigorously prosecuted, for the two past winters—the system of Evening Schools; and from the already known results of these schools, there can be little doubt but that they will materially assist in diminishing ignorance and vice, which always harbor where men congregate most thickly. During the present winter, not less than a thousand young persons, whose time and energies, toilsome avocations demand during all the hours of daylight, will, in these evening schools, acquire so much of the knowledge of reading and writing, as shall stimulate them to great and noble efforts for self improvement hereafter. Let these schools receive, more than heretofore, the cordial sympathy and hearty support of the philanthropic. But the towns or school committees would find

it—in the present state of public sentiment in many villages, and the present pecuniary condition of many parents—a paying investment to devote some portion of the school money to the support of these schools. Let the young, who are employed all day in manual toil but go to these Evening Schools long enough to find how “sweeter also than honey and the honey comb,” are the words of wisdom and the ways of understanding, and they will need strong temptations completely to debase and brutalize them.

In addition to these excellent Evening Schools in every place sufficiently large to admit of a gradation of schools—for in such villages this classification of scholars and studies, according to ages and attainments, should on no account be neglected—those larger boys and girls, from whom early education was unfortunately withheld, should be gathered in a school by themselves, and should there receive instruction appropriate to their circumstances. Say as much as we will about making attainments simply the standard by which to classify scholars; it will not, as every teacher and every observing school committee man well knows, answer to put boys and girls of twelve to twenty in the same classes with children of five and seven, even when both sorts must read and spell words of two and three letters. The larger ones have a commendable pride or sense of personal dignity, which will be offended and wounded by such a classification. They are well aware of their inferiority and will not consent to have it made too prominent. But then they have a maturity of mind, a power to grasp conclusions from premises, and to learn by reflection and comparison, which the younger ones have not. They therefore need a different course of instruction. They are quite mature in body and can bear confinement, and therefore they need another mode of discipline. The two classes, even if possessing equal attainments, should be separated. And certainly these unfortunate youth should not be classified and sent to the same schools as those of their own age who are better advanced in knowledge attend, for they would be still more deeply and discouragingly mortified. They should be provided with a room by themselves, and with instruction adapted at once to their attainments, and to their maturity of mind and body. Many who now attend the Evening Schools from shame alone—sometimes on account of dress and sometimes on account of ignorance—would attend this school, and might even prepare themselves to enter the graded day schools; and many more who attend no school but the great ungraduated, promiscuous, ever-open school of vice and debasement, would enter such a school, and having learned how delightful and fascinating is education and knowledge,

would grow up to overcome early disadvantages, and to be intelligent ornaments of a refined and progressive community.

The other agency needed for the prevention of absences from schools, is the Infant School. Where the schools are graded it is found best to admit no children to the public schools proper, until the age of five. But all children—particularly those belonging to the class from which most of our absences come—as early as the age of three, are more or less abroad. They are then very fond of each other's society, and soon even at that immature period contract both a love of freedom and mischief, and a hatred of restraint and continuous and systematic application. If neglected or allowed for the two years between three and five to run in the streets among older and more vicious playmates, and compelled to learn nothing, they will be ready to become truants whenever they are forced to go to school.

Now if they could be taken at this tender age into an Infant School—and mothers who are obliged by poverty or misfortune to labor, would rejoice at such opportunities—they would learn order, good habits, and a fondness for knowledge, which in two years would place them beyond all the ordinary temptations to truancy or absence from school. They should not be gathered into these to be taught much about reading and calculating, or any other book learning; but to be amused and profited, to be taught to think, to sing, to talk, to see, to hear, and to observe, and in short to be taught just what Xenophon tells us the ancient Persian youth, in their early school days, were taught—to  *speak the truth and to play*. They might, or might not, be taught their letters, but they should be well taught to obey, to be honest, to love and to admire beauty, knowledge and excellence. If such a school could be set up in all our large villages, and could be well patronized and recommended by our respectable people, it would almost destroy all occasion for a truant law. It should, however, have ample play ground, and exercises in this should be more frequent than exercises with spellers or arithmetics. It is believed that no reasonable objection could be made to such a plan, and it certainly has the merit of attempting to remove a vast and growing evil in a manner at once philosophical and full of promise of good results. Let it be tried in some of our cities or large villages, in order that we may know how an agency that has accomplished much elsewhere will operate among our heterogeneous population.

## VISITATION AND SUPERVISION OF SCHOOLS.

While the general interest of the people of the several towns in their schools, and the determination to maintain them by more liberal appropriations, are steadily advancing, it is a matter of regret, that the same compliments cannot be uttered in regard to the visitation and supervision of our schools. This lies wholly with the towns and the inhabitants of the school districts. The towns must elect a School Committee, and may, or may not, vote to pay them for services and expenses; and most commonly when the vote is to pay, the amount is too little to be any compensation at all. This Committee is obliged by law to visit every school within two weeks of its commencement, and within the same time of its close.

But here many practical difficulties occur. As our law now stands, there are three parties—or may be at least three, independent and entirely unknown to each other—who are concerned in providing for commencing and superintending our public schools. The trustees of the districts, who alone—unless in case the town votes otherwise—are authorized to hire teachers, and of course to fix the times when the schools shall begin, and when they shall close—the Examining Committee, who may be the School Committee themselves, or a select Committee of their own number, or some person or persons by them selected not of their own body, or a County Inspector, over whom the Committee have no control, and with whom they have no connection—and lastly, the School Committee, who alone are clothed with the power to visit and superintend the schools. The trustees need not consult the Committee—neither the examiners nor the visitors—before bargaining with a teacher, and if that teacher has a County certificate, he need ask no favors of the Committee in regard to entering upon his school. In some cases, therefore, a Committee finds that a school in a particular district, has been opened a whole month before they receive any knowledge whatever of its existence.

The perplexities, arising from these causes, are not, after all, so serious as those arising from the want of adequate pecuniary provision to pay the expenses of proper visitation. The visitations now required by law are valuable; but there should be visits, at least, once a month, during the entire period of the school's progress. The visitation made at the beginning is of great value to the teacher and scholars, and if it could be followed by subsequent ones, the knowledge then acquired by

the visitor might be made to be highly profitable to the scholars. But as the Committee are neither paid for a visit, nor required to make another till near the close of the school—and the *set* examination day is the day most agreeable and convenient for all concerned—the last half-day of school is the time for the final visitation ; and this visitation is often made a mere *show-day*. No very great good can come of such a system of supervision. It is undoubtedly worth all its costs, and probably more, but this is nothing compared with what might be accomplished, with a system which should require the endorsement of the Visiting School Committee, or town Superintendent, to every teacher's contract—by whomsoever he had been examined or hired—specifying the time when his school should commence, and for how long it should continue ; which should also require that visitor to visit that school, at least, once a month, and should permit two visits a month, giving him at least a sufficient fee for the visits actually made to pay his traveling expenses ; and which should, furthermore, require the visitor to make a detailed report of each of these visits to the Committee, and through this Committee to the Commissioner of Public Schools, who would thus become acquainted with the exact condition of every school in the State, and who would, therefore, be prepared to administer the system with intelligence and vigor, and to make an accurate report to the General Assembly and suggestions for the further improvement of our wise system of public education. And this report should specify the modes of discipline and management of the school ; the methods of instruction ; the condition of the house and grounds, of the books, desks, furniture and apparatus ; the state of the register, and the number of scholars enrolled and actually attending, as well as the average attendance ; and such other matters as might be regarded important or interesting.

The supervision of our public schools must be attended to better, if we will derive from it the advantages which it so reasonably promises. It is designed to aid the teacher, and at the same time to compel him, in all his appropriate work to attain, at least, to a certain standard of excellence. It is to protect the scholars from a species of quackery—the most miserable of all kinds of delusion—in education ; a quackery that drugs and debilitates the mind, and produces a depraved condition of soul leading to all other delusions. It is to protect the community from imposition and insult, and to guard against the waste of money drawn by law from the hands that have earned it by hard industry and toil ; and in general, to be a means of giving correct and accurate information, to the parents and guardians of the chil-

dren taught, and to the patrons and supporters of our schools, on all matters pertaining to the conduct of those schools. But can any single one of these numerous and important matters be accurately and adequately laid before the public, after two short visits, as now required by law—especially when there is—as may be the case—a tacit understanding on the part of the teacher, visitor and scholars, that the first visit shall take note of what they do not know—and the last of what they have attempted to learn, while at neither of these visitations is an earnest effort made to ascertain how the scholars have been instructed, and how their habits have been cared for.

A reform here in the policy of the towns would do far more towards perfecting our school system than any other thing we could do for it. There is no modification of principle needed, scarcely any change required in the form of the statute, and but a slight additional expense could accrue. Yet this increased expense is an outlay absolutely essential to secure the community against immense and unnecessary pecuniary loss, and to direct and husband the money now appropriated for school purposes. It is always wastefulness, and that of the most reprehensible character, to set aside money or materials for the accomplishment of any enterprise, public or private, and then through carelessness in the plans, and negligent watching over the disbursement of that money, or the consumption of those materials, to allow the half or any portion, to be lost or misapplied. A small sum spent in addition to the present amount set apart for schools, in any town where there is now no rigid and systematic supervision of its schools, would, without doubt, increase largely the benefits derived to its inhabitants from the school money. There is a spirit of inquiry abroad in reference to this subject, and it cannot be long before the instincts of the people will bring the usages to conform to these suggestions of practical wisdom so full of the promise of economy and effectiveness.

### QUALIFICATIONS OF TEACHERS.

But in no direction has there been a more marked and gratifying progress than in the literary and moral qualifications of the teachers themselves, who instruct in our Schools. This might be inferred from the fact that more and more money is annually appropriated to the support of schools. That teachers are better qualified necessitates higher wages and larger taxation, and on the other hand more liberal provisions for the support of schools attracts a higher grade of talent.

Many of the teachers of the State now deem it an essential preparation for their duties—even when they know that a few terms in the school room may be their whole teaching life—to attend the State Normal School in Providence, and devote a period to a special review of the school studies, and to receiving instruction in methods of teaching and ordering a school. The majority of one or two hundred young ladies and gentlemen, who have spent a few weeks or months at that School, and who have gone forth to teach in almost every town of the State, have proved that they had been, while in our Normal School, deriving a great benefit. Some of them may have partially failed in governing and in imparting instruction, but no case of complete failure is now remembered. Others are known to have done only indifferently well, but even this number is insignificantly small. While by far the larger part of these pupils of the State, have shown themselves to be possessed of more than the usual spirit of zeal in their profession, and of sacrifice for the great object of all teaching, the good of others. They have also exhibited more skill in interesting children in their studies, and more tact in communicating instruction, and in inducing good habits by discipline, than is common in teachers inexperienced in the work of the school room.

In every step of our progress in public education and in the work of school improvement, well trained and enthusiastic teachers are a matter of the highest necessity. School houses, taxes and appropriations, town and district organizations, examiners, inspectors and committees are all worthless, unless accompanied by conscientious and skillful instructors. The work of imparting knowledge, of stimulating zeal, of quickening indifference, of kindling ardor in the pursuit of wisdom, of inducing patience under restraint, obedience to government, and improvement under discipline, must be done by the teacher. The community cannot do it, neither can the officers of the law accomplish it. By the public opinion, the labors and the active countenance of these, this work may be rendered much more pleasant, and may be performed in much less time and more thoroughly. But nothing can enable the school to dispense with the teacher. He is the mainspring of the whole machinery, and as he is well instructed in the nature and responsibilities of his office, and prepared by moral, intellectual, and practical attainments and habits, so will be his success in the school room. He must do the work here, and he must in most cases do it alone, and in accordance with his own methods. He should indeed labor and instruct and govern with reference to a systematic plan arranged and kept in operation by the people

themselves, through their intelligent representative agents the school committee; and yet the details of all this plan must be of his own contriving, and his action in all emergencies, and in all doubtful cases, must spring from his own most commonly unaided judgment.

There is, therefore, a manifest propriety that the State should, as it does, appropriate a sum of money to aid teachers to procure, in a small degree at least, those qualifications which are so vitally essential to the highest success of our school system. The sum thus set apart is four thousand three hundred dollars, and it is used to support the State Normal School in Providence, and the annual Normal Institutes held in different parts of the State. This sum gives yearly about six months of systematic review and drill on the common school studies, to one hundred and fifty young men and women, and one week of lectures, address and social intercourse and discussion to nearly three hundred others. And it is not too much to say that no money spent on our school system produces a larger and a quicker return of profit to the community than this. In no place in the land are better methods of teaching daily exemplified than in the Normal School; no where else can a young person find more pleasing employment in study, and obtain for his mind a more profitable discipline; or acquaint himself sooner with a knowledge of natural, philosophical, and interesting methods of imparting instruction, and providing for the government of a common school, than in this school, so well supported by the State, and so well supplied with all the appliances for the work of teaching.

#### NORMAL SCHOOL AND INSTITUTE.

To Mr. D. P. Colburn, the able Principal, and Professor S. S. Greene, who planned, and in fact established, the Normal School, it is barely possible to award too much credit. And to their able assistants, who have all been pupils in that school, great praise is due for their zeal and devotion to their work. In another place will be found a Report by Mr. Colburn, showing the origin and history of the school, and facts in relation to the number of its past and present pupils. As this Report fully and amply covers the ground, I refrain from saying more. It will not, however, be deemed inappropriate, to call attention to the great need of a suitable building for the use of this school. It is believed that it has become a part of the settled policy of the State to aid in educating those who are to labor so faith-



fully and so self-sacrificingly to promote all her material and moral interests. And certainly no better time than the present can occur, to provide suitable and commodious accommodations for this very useful institution.

As we must rely on teachers for so large a share of the work of elevating the standard of our schools, the State has wisely appropriated a sum of money to defray the expenses of Teachers' or Normal Institutes. For this year one only of these was held, in the City of Providence, and was largely attended by teachers from every town in the State with, perhaps a single exception. It is believed that no means that could be used, in the present condition of things, could accomplish more for the elevation of the courage, and the general culture of our school teachers, than these Institutions.

#### EDUCATION OF THE BLIND, DEAF AND IDIOTIC.

The appropriation for the education of the Deaf Mutes, the Blind, and the Idiotic, has been used in part only. It does a vast deal of good, and would be still more available, if in a few cases the sum could be increased to one hundred and fifty dollars a year. Though probably this would be better to depend on the special act of the Legislature, than on any general law. There are many others in our State who could be aided by this donation if they were found and brought forward. The several School Committees of the towns might make it a part of their duties to search out and recommend the indigent Deaf, or Blind, or Idiotic to the care of the Commonwealth, which provides a sum large enough to educate all belonging to that unfortunate class within its borders. This body of men is charged by law with the interests of education in each town, and why should they not look after the poor whose infirmities forbid their entering the public schools?

#### WHAT NOW REMAINS TO BE DONE.

Thus we have gone over the signs of our progress and marked the category of our short-comings as they are revealed by the revolutions of another year, and thus have we looked forward and hailed the glad omens of continued and still greater prosperity. We are steadily and surely ascending. But it is along a mountain path-

way that we are toiling. At one time the road is steep, yet every step is upward, and serves to enlarge the circle of our enraptured vision. Each moment new points of beauty and interest come out of the dim cloudland, on the far off horizon, and thrill us with new delight. At another time, thick forests hang over our heads, and shut us in almost from earth and sky, save at rare intervals where a decayed tree has fallen, and down the vista thus made among its fellows, we get a transient glimpse of the great meadow basin below. Again we meet an overhanging crag, and in making our circuit to reach its summit, we are forced to descend for a space. But soon, however, we mount again, and rising now above rock and dell, over wood and cliff, we soon scale the topmost peak, and stand with the great world of loveliness and grandeur stretched away indefinitely beneath us, and the great blue empyrean towering into infinite sublimity above us. So it is with our progress in the glorious enterprise we have undertaken of educating all our youth. Sometimes we seem to see the end of our work almost attained, and again we see it not. Now we behold the whole land beneath us conquered and subdued to peace, fertility and happiness. Again we are involved in gloom, and again seemingly we descend from our cheerful heights. But if courage and patience continue, we shall yet explore the summit of our hope, the end of our ambition, and triumph to see a people teeming in all our valleys and plains, on each of whom the sun of knowledge beams, and with all of whom virtue abides.

But congratulation cannot perform our duties. Neither will these fond anticipations justify our neglect of the diligent use of the means necessary to our further progress. Nothing but patient inquiry and energetic labor in this same good cause, will acquit us from blame and entitle us to an honorable discharge from future obligations. Nor yet can we blindly set about this work, and carry it forward without forecast. The wise men who planned our system, and inaugurated it with such flattering omens, and such glowing tokens of success, not only derived their inspiration from labor, but also wrung all their trophies from opposition, in the name of that same omnipotent goddess. They shunned no toil, avoided no expense, dreaded no danger, in the work which they so nobly began, and which they have now so confidently committed to us to complete. And shall we, who have already profited largely by their work, now refuse or shrink from the glorious task of acquiring immortal honor by its performance? While we know that God has given to our State such an abundance of rich intellectual capacities, shall we allow them, or a large portion

of them, to slumber in inaction, or be waked into life only to enlist in the service of vice and crime ?

There is now no occasion to go over the principles on which these public schools are founded. Every citizen knows them well. It is not, therefore, worth the time to recount the arguments which show that the public schools can, by our system of committee visitation, and free discussion of their methods of instruction and government, be far better than private schools, besides being at the same time cheaper, and far more convenient for general attendance. All this is matter of common experience, known in the every day life of our people ; and it is assumed in all our taxation. It is not here that we should speak of those schools as a necessity, if we would educate all our children. Private enterprise cannot do it, and voluntary charity cannot be so organized as to do it. Only the combination of the whole body of citizens, as they combine to govern themselves, has the power and means at command to instruct every child, rich or poor, high or low, in that common knowledge which is almost as inalienably his by right, as is the air or the sunlight. The histories of nations has demonstrated these things ; and we assume them. How can we carry out these principles into practice ?

This slight review of the principles on which is grounded every act of our Legislature and Municipalities, authorizing, establishing, and maintaining public schools, leads directly to the answer of this question so often asked in places other than this. It is only by an enlightened and persevering action in concert, that anything can be done, with any hope of success. Upon this supposition proceeds all our legislation, whether it be merely permissive or mandatory. It allows and demands, that the whole people of the State shall combine under the direction of the School Law, and its executive officer, to diffuse information, to collect statistics, and to gather and disburse revenues for the one common object. It enjoins upon the towns a still more closely united and more vigorous, because more concentrated union for the same end. And lastly, it permits the people of the several school districts to band themselves for this same work. Thus every where is the idea inculcated that only by a concert of activity among the people themselves, can this work be done.

And here we find that there is a vast difference between a system of public education carried on by the people themselves, and one carried on by the State. The State may lend encouragement and afford a jealous watch care over such a system. But in our case it does not perform the work needed to keep it in operation. The municipalities

—which are no other than the combined citizens—must establish and care for their own schools ; and the State has no right, and therefore properly attempts to claim and to use no authority, to enforce upon any town the establishment of schools. If the people choose to have no schools for their children in any town, all the State does is to deprive them of any share of the premium paid to those towns, which do establish schools. Such being the facts as to the authority of the commonwealth over the people's schools, and such being the necessity for an enlightened concert of action among the members of our community, there is manifest propriety that the officer charged by the State, with some general care over these institutions of learning, should annually make such practical suggestions relating to the management, the visitation and supervision, the government and discipline, the methods of instruction, and the order and classification of studies and pupils in our schools, as may seem best calculated to promote this harmony of action, as well as the individual good of each particular school in the land.

### PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

Since, then, this is made the Commissioner's duty by the express words of the Statute, and since this is the only opportunity that occurs annually to gain the ear of all the people of the State, let us have patience, and consider, briefly, the order of studies in our schools, and the proper methods of giving instruction in those studies. This will point out a duty belonging at once to the inhabitants of the several school districts, to the school committees of the towns, and to the teachers in the various schools. For all of these must combine in deciding and arranging either for what must be taught, or how and when it shall be taught. We shall then be prepared to consider the modes of governing a school, and also to direct attention to the object to be attained by visitations to schools, and the proper modes of rendering this efficient and profitable.

In determining what shall be the studies introduced, and what shall be the order in which they shall be taken up, as well as in settling the methods of giving instruction in those studies, a preliminary question ought to be in part, at least, answered : What is the purpose of our school education and discipline ? To answer this very important and extensive question would consume by far too much time and space. It must, therefore, be passed over with a single remark, al-

though it is by no means, as yet, well understood by teachers themselves, much less by the members of our community in general.

### THE OBJECT OF EDUCATION.

The object of education—both in our public schools and elsewhere—is not simply to store the memory with facts and principles, though those facts are in themselves interesting and useful, and those principles underlie and support the action of all our daily life. Nor yet is it to make the mind skillful, and expert in recalling and repeating, or even in applying to common use, those facts and principles. It is not simply to impart information, however various, new and practical it may be; neither is it to give instruction simply, however important and rich that may be. It is not to make children remember and repeat wonderful recitations and computations. But it is, rather, to lay broad, deep and firm, the foundations of a true and noble character, out of which shall grow naturally and continually a proper, a faithful, and a seasonable discharge of every duty of both public and private life. It is like preparing the mind, as we prepare the fertile soil for a garden, where shall grow, in appropriate beauty and utility, every virtue and every grace that is pleasant to the sight, and excellent for the use of mankind; rather than like planting the germs of those virtues and graces in a wilderness, and cultivating them there with patientest assiduity. For if the mind be thus well prepared, it is hardly too much to say that its own spontaneous energy will create a divine beauty to cover it, or that God's own Holy Spirit will—as did His power in that earliest garden—symbolic at once of what man's character should be, as well as of what his future abode may be—implant the vital elements of all usefulness; while, if, as is too frequently done, care be taken only to throw upon the almost unprepared soul, and there to watch and guard these principles of knowledge and virtue, they will thrive but while that watchcare is present, and vigilantly guarding and fostering them.

The education, or instruction, or discipline, or training of our schools should be so planned and conducted as to make the susceptibilities of childhood into living powers for the prompt, energetic and successful performance of every duty, in every emergency, that may arise in the whole course of the man's immortal life; whether that emergency demand vigorous doing, patient waiting, stout-hearted suffering, or impetuous and intrepid daring. To comprehend the means of accom-

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plishing all this, is not in the power of a single mind working alone ; much less is it for one unassisted to contrive the social machinery to effect it, or to keep that machinery in harmonious action, when it has been invented and set in operation. It is for every citizen to contribute something towards this great work. Frequent and earnest discussions must be held, and intelligent experiments must be tried and carefully watched ; the system of public schools established by past generations, designed to effect this great end, and confidently believed to be capable, in connection with family and religious instruction, of performing it quite as completely as any human instrumentalities can perform any great purpose, must be studied and administered regardless of any outlay of toil and expense demanded by wise calculation and prudent forecast.

These schools seek to accomplish this grand work by two agencies—the acquisition of knowledge, and the discipline of orderly government. The first of these affords employment to the pupils, and the second acts as the formative power to mould and fashion the character. To the first it often happens that attention is alone directed, while the latter, it is sometimes supposed, can be secured independent of the other. But government or improving discipline can never be secured without employment ; and when the subject is left in idleness, its semblance can be exhibited only in solitary confinement. The first business of a school then is to furnish employment for its attendants, and this work must be made to appear delightful, and to be pleasant. It will not answer to say that learning can never be made a pleasure to the young, and that since there is no royal road to science, all study must necessarily be somewhat dull and tedious. The little child *must be pleased* in order to be incited to learn. It will not do to say to him that knowledge is very profitable, and will, if studied with zeal, soon open her now hidden stores of delights, and become attractive even to ravishment. He knows nothing about any desire, but those desires for something good, which the natural action of his senses is continually forcing upon him ; and even this good must be very obvious, and on the outer surface at that. And hence the first studies he is called to pursue, or the first employment he must be engaged in, to speak more in accordance with our maxims above recited, must be of such a kind as immediately and naturally to suggest their own profit and convey a keen pleasure. What are such studies ? For these are the first to be pursued, and in the pursuit of these we are to secure discipline, and to form and establish character.

## THE FIRST AND MOST IMPORTANT SCHOOL STUDY.

We now in our schools teach first the rudiments of our **MOTHER TONGUE**, and in this we undoubtedly do wisely. A child should early learn the letters and the words of that noble old language, which is to be to him the instrument by which he is to acquire and communicate, far the greatest part of that knowledge which shall be useful to him and others. If it be said that much is to be learned by observation, it will be a sufficient answer to say that our observations are commonly reported to us, and their results are always treasured up by us, in the words of our native tongue ; so that in all our observations we are much dependent on the words which name things and processes, and in our remembrances of those observations we are entirely dependent on words ; and when we undertake to communicate those observations or their results, we are wholly at fault unless good words are familiar to us. Not until the pupils in our schools have a good understanding of their vernacular tongue, are they prepared to study, in the technical sense of that term. They may be prepared and able to *learn*, but they cannot well *study*. For there is a great difference between learning and studying. The one may be done without much application, and sometimes without much labor ; but the other always implies and demands application, and often long continued and exhausting labor.

Little children are, therefore, to be taught and helped to learn, with very little labor on their part, and, in fact, with pleasure rather than with weariness to them. They generally know almost all the words and terms in common use about the house, the farm, or the workshop, before they enter the school. These words they know, or can readily and almost infallibly recognize by the ear ; and they also know well how to make the sounds that compose them ; though in this last respect they are often far from accurate. Very often, too, the children, when they enter the school, know the forms of the letters which spell these words ; though it is quite rare to find a child, taught entirely at home to know the sounds of these letters correctly. The first business, then, of a child in school, is to learn the forms and sounds of the English alphabet. He is not now to *study* these—for he really has no taste and no habits fitted for *study*, and hence has no business with study as yet ; but he is to *learn* them. It is therefore the teacher's business—to use a phrase severely condemned, and not unjustly—to learn him these letters ; for the learning is to be infused into his mind.

To do this quickly, thoroughly and pleasantly, is a great practical problem. To do it in the natural method—that is to communicate the idea or notion of the thing, before the name is told—or the name is a positive nuisance in the child's mind where it goes before the idea—requires great invention, skill and patience. The acuity of observation and attention must be aroused, the power of understanding and comparing, and judging, too, must be awakened and kept on the alert, and all this must be made pleasant and the occasion of great progress in the work of disciplining, and strengthening all these important faculties. This will educate the mind, and the ear, and eye, at the same time, and if, as a recreation or change of work, the pupil is allowed—for the idea of *requiring* is hardly to be admitted into his first few school days—to mark the forms of these letters on his slate or the blackboard, his hand will also be educated. Let it be remembered that each additional one of the five senses you call in to aid in illustrating, or taking cognizance of a fact to be learned, or remembered, is a fresh reinforcement brought up at a critical moment, and increases the chance of a complete victory. While thus learning his letters—their forms and sounds—he may be learning much useful information concerning the shape and size of the school room, the geography of the play-ground, and of the neighboring street and lots, of the practice of singing and marching, and also of certain sports and plays. The object is to teach the letters thoroughly—so that he shall never need to learn them again. How many young men and young women, within the last ten years, who thought they knew their letters, and who certainly could read tolerably, have been compelled to re-learn the sounds of the letters in the alphabet, when they came before the examiner, or began to give instruction in a common school! And the explanation of their ignorance is found in the fact that they learned the *forms* and not the *sounds* of letters. This thorough learning both of forms and sounds—this Phonetic method—once mastered; would save our youth the mortifying necessity, which so many teachers have been compelled to submit to, of a failure to pass the ordeal of the School Committee's examination. How is this state of things to be changed?



## ORTHOGRAPHY AND ORTHOEPEY.

First we must teach the alphabet in a better manner—making the child to understand both the forms and the sounds of the letters. We must then in some way provide connected narratives and lessons, with some sense and real information in them; and thus enable the child to read for the purpose of gaining information, and at the same time he must be deeply interested in communicating that information to his teachers or classmates, or friends. The correct orthography of each word should be mastered—a branch now better taught in our schools than five years since, but still most villainously neglected or slovenly and ruinously attended to—and so taught as that the eye shall take in every letter of every word, as does that of a practiced proof-reader—that the ear also, when hearing the word pronounced, even in a hurried and indistinct manner, shall at once and infallibly report to the mind, the characters, silent or otherwise, which compose it—and that the hand shall make those letters to grow beneath the pen without mistake, and with almost the speed of the electric fluid, so soon as the mind thinks on the word it would use. Taught for these ends, and taught in this manner, as the homely old—and therefore the best—phrascology terms it, spelling as a school study, and a school duty, becomes one of the best means for the formation and development of truthful, zealous and useful character.

And while this branch of learning is going on, the just and appropriate sounds of each letter and combination of letters should be learned—both to be known by the ear and the eye, and to be formed by the voice. This learning to know sounds by the ear, and to conceive them when the letters that represent them are seen, is the great work of learning, in the words of the old grammarians, “how to speak the English language correctly.” Every child has an ear to notice the difference between the word *cow*, when the diphthongal sound *ow* has its appropriate pronunciation, and when made—as it often is—to sound as if spelled *keow*; there is a difference which the most incorrectly taught ear must at once recognize, between the correct sound of *a*, in *man*, and its not uncommon caricatures on either hand, as best expressed by this method of spelling, *maun* and *me-an*; and so in every case of provincial and vulgar pronunciation, it is easy for the ear to note the dissimilarity of the sounds, though the mind may not be able readily to determine which is the true and elegant

pronunciation ; while it will be by far harder to train the voice always and infallibly to produce those elegant and well bred modes. But this must be done, and can be done, with much less labor than many teachers undertake to persuade themselves it would cost.

I have seen a school of thirty scholars, in the very midst of a community whose practice in pronouncing English could hardly be worse, brought, by a skillful and faithful teacher, in less than two terms of eleven weeks each, into most excellent habits. It only requires a good example in the teacher, and vigilant, good natured watching and judicious correction, to produce accuracy here. And there is nothing that so clearly and unmistakably distinguishes the boor from the well bred and gentle, as the manner of pronouncing the few vowel or diphthongal sounds in our language. And these vowel sounds—easy as they are to make—let it be remembered, constitute the chief difficulties to a native of our country, in the pronunciation of our language. Foreigners have great trials with our hard consonants, and their combinations, but we ourselves hardly ever find trouble here. These sounds are not numerous enough to be a great task, to even small scholars—much less to teachers. They are in every-day use, and are, in fact, repeated a thousand times a day. According to the most rigid analysis of our Mother tongue, it has only nineteen of the vowel sounds, and ringing in our ears so continually as they are, every teacher ought to be ashamed if he does not both know them and know how to produce them accurately. But it is believed that by no means all of our six hundred teachers possess either that amount of knowledge or skill. Certain it is that their daily practice does not reveal it, if they do actually possess it. Examiners of teachers should direct more attention to this matter, and should demand that teachers shall be much better models of pronunciation than they now are.

This subject may seem the more difficult, because we really have no good and well agreed on names for these nineteen vowel sounds, and also because so many of our vowel characters represent more than one of these sounds. But this difficulty is more in appearance than in reality, for it is easy to call the sounds by the letter which most commonly stands for them, thus: *A sounds*, *E sounds*, and so on ; or the sounds may be called by some expressive epithet, as Long A, Broad A, Modified A, Intermediate A, Italian A, and Short A, to designate respectively the sounds of A as heard in *Fate*, *Fall*, *Fair*, *Fast*, *Far*, and *Fat*. And it does not at all need any common and general agreement, as to what these names shall be ; for it only requires that we shall know the thing or sound meant, and have some common sign, under-

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stood by those who are studying together, in order that we may all think upon that thing. Each teacher, therefore, may have a sign, peculiar to himself, to represent or name the sound of each or any vowel; but he should clearly know and be able at a moment to exemplify that sound.

Such a thorough knowledge of the various vowel sounds of our language, and such a thorough drilling upon them early in the school course, would not only save time to the pupil, and raise him at once above the suspicion of being low and ill-bred, but it would do more than any other thing to render stable and uniform the orthoepy of our tongue. We are already noted in parts of New England for our very *flat* manner of pronouncing many of the sounds of A, of OU, of OW, of U, and of O, or OO, and we are also characterized by a certain nasal tone or force, which is peculiarly uncouth and exceedingly disagreeable. These peculiarities can be almost entirely eradicated in a single generation, if our teachers will give attention to them; or more properly, if our examiners of teachers and our visitors of schools, will compel the candidates to understand them, and will see that those to whom the certificates are given, shall be faithful in these matters. A child is as easily taught to recognize the correct sound of a letter and to make it, as he can be taught to know and utter the incorrect one; and having once known the right and formed his organs of speech to produce it accurately, he is in comparatively little danger of turning away from it.

Another fault very common, and very much to be deprecated, is the practice of clipping so many of our words, and slurring over so many of our obscure vowels. We talk fast, and in our hurry we do no more than make motions at the words with our tongues, and without waiting to form the sound, or even to allow it to form itself in our throats, much less to allow it time to escape into the air with decency, we literally pitch it out, and tumble another and a third after it, as though we feared they would burn on our lips. In this way consonants are cut off, syllables omitted, vowels obscured, letters confounded, accents misplaced, and in fact the poor words treated with as little ceremony as was poor Falstaff, when carried away for a basket of dirty clothes. The manner in which too many teachers permit themselves and their scholars to pronounce and hurry through their reading lessons and their conversations, is truly alarming. One must really become well acquainted with them, and with their rapid method of speaking, as well as with their uncouth elisions and perversions of letters and sounds, in order to understand what they are saying. Can we

expect our children to become good readers and speakers, while such men and women, so careless and slovenly in all that constitutes elegance in speech, are allowed to be their models and instructors? And are we doing our duty to our offspring if we do not provide a remedy?

If it should be said, that to insist on accuracy here, would be the certain way to reject a large number of good, well-informed and faithful teachers, it would be sufficient to reply, that it is far better to leave our schools unopened for a term, than to allow the present careless habits to grow upon our scholars; and we may be sure that a thorough examination of all candidates for the office of teacher, and the rejection of all who do not come fully up to the standard of a good pronunciation, would stimulate all teachers to prepare themselves thoroughly and accurately on this very important branch of their profession.

### TEACHING READING.

But the learning of letters is only preliminary and preparatory to the great business of our common schools, the learning to read. The child is taught the forms of the letters and their combination in words and the union of these words in sentences, in order that by means of the eye alone he may gather from the irregular and arbitrary characters before him an infinity of ideas, thoughts and emotions; and he is taught the sounds of these letters, that he may, by accurately uttering them to the ears of others, awaken in their minds the same infinitude of wonder and joy which their sight caused in his own bosom. Yet, in most of our schools, Reading, as it is technically and properly called, is sadly neglected, in both its great branches of gaining ideas from the sight of the words, and of communicating thought by the vocal utterance of their sounds.

By means of our letters and the ability to read them in all their varied combinations, we come into possession of the key by which we may open, enjoy and profit by the stores of wisdom laid up by other men, both during their absence and after their death. Writing and printing are means of preserving by unmeaning signs the ideas and the experiences of mankind. When we teach a child to read we merely prepare him to understand the things which these characters signify; so that they shall at once suggest to his mind the ideas which the writer had when he wrote them; and thus gather by his eye the ability to make his future acquisitions more rapid and more independent.

of others. This is silent reading, or, as we call it, reading to one's self. But we also want the pupil ready to take the written or printed page, and by his voice and manner so translate its mysterious signs into sounds, that all who hear him shall find awakened in their own souls the same ideas and emotions, as originally dwelt in the soul of their author. Thus the child learns to read, that he may go into solitude, and by looking may learn all that sages have ever found out, may hear all that orators have ever said, may enjoy all that poets have sung, and glow with all that seers have ever revealed. And when he has thus taken all these glorious things into his mind and heart, he must learn to clothe them all with the divine harmony and dignity of the human voice, and make them wake, if possible, a greater enthusiasm in those who hear them.

But it is very much to be doubted if all our scholars above twelve years of age in our public schools can do the first of these things, to say nothing of the second. Though all must acknowledge that it is a great thing to learn to read a language so complicated and extensive as is the English language, yet it is not, after all, considering that the child hears and uses its words every day, so difficult a task as to occupy more than two years after the age of five. A boy, commencing with his letters at four, five or six, ought to be able to read almost all common reading adapted to his capacity in a few months, so that he can spell out the meaning very well to himself. His ear was taught the whole of this before his eye began to learn. And now all that is needed is so to train his eye—that quickest of all the human senses to learn and report what comes within its range—so that he shall depend on that, and not on the voice of his neighbor for information. A very little time will suffice for this, if we will only begin at the proper place and proceed in the proper manner.

It takes but few weeks for even the just opened eye of the infant, to learn to *read* the external signs of emotion in the face of its mother. It quickly knows by the curves and dimples which joy writes, that its mother is pleased, and it laughs at her delight. It reads the force of reproof in the stern lines which grief or command mark on the face, and it hushes itself, or weeps from sympathy or fear. In a few more months it has learned the meaning and the force of the greater part of the common words used both in books and in conversation, and also recognizes all the tones, gestures, inflections, pauses, and emphases used to vary the meaning, or add to the power of words and make them express passion or awaken emotion. All this he learns before he can speak, and in less than a twelvemonth, and all by his eye and his ear.

Soon after this age the child commences to imitate these signs and sounds, and before two more years have rolled over his head, he has learned to use all these words—so much like infinity in their number, significations and combinations. If now an infant beginning with no knowledge whatever, and no foundation for learning anything—save only his native born capacity—can learn the mysteries of spoken language, and the signs of passions, emotions, and thoughts, and can learn not only to understand these as others use them, but can also learn to use them accurately for himself, why should it require from five to ten years, to teach him merely to know these words, their import, and the signs and sounds by which they are expressed? Yet it is a matter of bitter knowledge that many boys and girls, now in our common schools, who have attended regularly for four months every winter during the last ten years, cannot now read a passage in a newspaper, so as to understand it for themselves—to say nothing of conveying the sense to others. Why is this?

Many reasons might be assigned for it, such as the fact that these children have always been sent irregularly to school, and therefore they have had no connected opportunities to learn. Their parents had no knowledge themselves, and of course knew not how to instruct them at home, nor how to inspire in them an ambition to learn, nor how to find for them the means of learning. They were in school one day, and out of school at work two, and in mischief another. They were compelled with their parents to move from one village to another, and always began at the foot of the class in every new school. They had new teachers every successive season, if they were permanent residents of a town. But worst of all and—sadly be it said—most detrimental to them and to their teachers too, those who were hired to teach them, neglected their duty to these ignorant, and therefore, disheartened ones, in order to give attention to those who were more advanced in knowledge. How often in our public schools are these backward and unfortunate boys and girls neglected and pushed aside, and frowned upon; and finally absolutely driven from the school by a teacher, who is receiving wages for instructing them. A case—unfortunately not an uncommon one by any means—occurred once, which may illustrate this idea. A stranger stepped into a school room, and asked the privilege to hear the ordinary school exercises, while he rested himself. A first class in reading, consisting of seven large boys and girls, took up a half hour in their exercises. A second class of ten scholars were on the floor twenty-five minutes. A third class of six, fifteen; a fourth class of thirteen, just beginning to read sentences such as these—“1

*can get his hat," "He has a dog,"*—stood up eleven minutes and read one sentence each. Then came a class of abcedarians, consisting of seven, and they remained up just five minutes by the watch. Lastly, came a lone boy of about ten years, who had been sitting with a spelling book before him—one of those sort of books that seem to have cost ages of dullness to invent, in which the worst of English vies with the stupidest of words, to cover the most space with the least sense—a book that professes to define words by their use in good-for-nothing sentences. This boy began by spelling his words and pronouncing them, and the whole lesson is here given: "*I will aim to do right.*" "*Fame may be bought too dear.*" And that boy was allowed to read but once a day. "He was such a dunce the teacher could not afford to be *bothered* with his blunders;" so it was said in answer to the stranger's inquiry. Afterwards a class in geography, of two scholars, took up three-quarters of an hour, and a class of two in grammar, or rather in the analysis of the English language, occupied an hour.

So it is among many of our schools. The small scholars, and those who are dull and backward, are sadly neglected for the brighter and more advanced. While the right way is to teach this latter class to employ and instruct themselves, and devote more time to those who cannot help nor employ themselves. If the teachers in our schools would insist on giving at least twice as much time to the dull ones and to the little ones, and would manifest towards these twice as much love and patience, they would better repay it than the quicker and the more learned. Let scholars be so well taught to read early in life that it becomes a pleasure and a delight to them, and there is but little danger of their forgetting it, or of their failing to use it. And it is not too much to say that if they can be taught to read well before they are seven—and they ought certainly to be able to read for their own amusement and information as soon as this—that they will hardly need urging in order to learn everything else. While if they do not learn to read well at this age or a very little later, it then becomes a very difficult task for them ever to learn that very necessary and useful accomplishment.

A teacher then should most carefully and enthusiastically devote himself to the children learning to read; and should contrive by means of all his art, not to allow them to become discouraged, nor to fall behind their classmates. He should make the reading lessons full of interest, by means of stories connected with them; by means of questions asked to the scholars, to be answered by their own reflections on the lesson; and by pictures or drawings—even if they are quite rude—

on the blackboard. Then let the scholar *tell* the book story, with the book closed, and make one to match it. Thus keeping him always at thinking, and never allowing him to read a sentence without understanding it, and it will require but few months to make a very good reader out of a very dull boy, who does nevertheless think about his reading lessons. Never let *Reading* get separated from *Talking*, and especially let it not stray away from nor go before *Thinking*.

The Commissioner has by personal visits and examination of about one hundred schools within the State during the last six months, given much attention to this topic, and he has found that in most schools it is sadly neglected, and, where time and care is devoted to it, is occasionally very imperfectly taught. He is not disposed to deny but that time enough is set apart for the reading exercises. Take the child entering school at five, and who may safely be calculated as having ten school years before him. The first two of these years will be almost exclusively devoted to this work of learning to read, and of the remaining eight, a portion—varying as the child advances in age, from one-third to one-sixth—will be given to the same purpose. Here is more than one-fourth of all the school time of the scholar given up to reading—or more properly—to learning to read; for it must be confessed that in all this time thus consumed, not a great deal of information is gained by the pupil. The reading books are made up of elegant extracts, generally selected on account of the beauties of style, and choiceness of the words in which they are written—and these are too often synonymous with vague and useless platitudes, as dull to children as to grown persons. Most of these extracts had a meaning and a power, it is true, in the connection in which they originally stood, but detached from that place, they are as lacking in meaning as was the single brick which the ancient Greek philosopher carried to the market, as a specimen of a convenient house. Joined with other things, these passages were admirable, but taken as we find them in our Readers, they are strangely tedious and lacking in all power to awaken a scholar's enthusiasm. To compel a sensible child—such a child as the Great Author of intelligence sends into life—with an insatiable curiosity to learn something new from every sight, sound, motion, or object around him—to compel such a child to mutter—literally, to sullenly and indistinctly grumble—over these elegant, and therefore meaningless, extracts, during about three-tenths of all the years he can spend at school, is almost sublimely stupid and grandly prodigal. He cannot learn to read in this way, and must from reading what he does not and cannot understand, contract numerous bad habits, which he is hereafter to break



up with a still greater expense of time and labor. He now spends some three years in learning how *not to read*,—for in the majority of cases, this is the exact and shameful truth, which should certainly be concealed, were there a possibility of correcting the evil without a public exposure—and in contracting a positive distaste for school and school books. The Commissioner, in his tours of visitations to the hundred schools above named, was scarcely able to find a dozen scholars, out of more than two thousand whom he heard, who could read a passage from these elegant extracts in a manner so as to be easily and accurately understood. Some did read well, and more were embarrassed, but he listened to scholars coming from the study of Algebra to the reading class, who, in thrice reading a paragraph to him, could not make him comprehend the words of the extract, much less the sense, until he took the book and ran his eye over the passage. And these youth had no defect in their speech, nor were they in any degree abashed by his presence.

#### TEACHING TO SPEAK THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

Another fruitful field to be cultivated at present, and one most disgracefully neglected, is correctly speaking the English language. Reference is now made more especially to grammatical accuracy. This is not the place—and if it were, and my pen were compelled to tell “the whole truth,” this Report would be strangely disfigured—to hazard a conjecture as to the probable number of teachers who use singular verb-forms to agree with plural noun-forms; who use adverbs for adjectives, and vice versa; who use the pronoun *them* in place of both *these* and *those*, and seem never to miss an opportunity of using the words “*nairy*,” “*haint*,” and the like. It would be too much to expect perfection, and accomplished elegance in the use of language and in the pronunciation of all words, in each one of our six hundred teachers, the average ages of whom scarce exceeds twenty years; and many of whom, from the necessity of the case, have received a very imperfect and fragmentary education. Nor would it be at all reasonable to demand all the virtues and all the refined graces of polished scholarship, at a salary of thirty dollars a month, and employment guaranteed for only four out of the twelve months. But improvement may very properly and safely be looked for and insisted on in each of these things.

Considering all things—the youthfulness of our teachers, their lim-

ited education, their low wages—less than those of an ordinary hostler—their very frequent removals, and the fact that they are yet so carelessly examined, and so negligently supervised and encouraged—it is almost a miracle that they are the half as well informed and instructed as they are. If an owner of a cotton mill should employ overseers for the different parts of his establishment—the carding room—the spinning room—the weaving room—and the finishing room—at the lowest possible wages, without previous acquaintance with them and without definite and intelligent recommendations—expecting to see them and hear accurate, detailed and specific reports from them no more than twice, at most, during the whole period of four months—at the end of which time they were to be superseded by others, who might adopt entirely different methods of carrying on the whole operations of their several departments—we should not expect him to reap any great profit from his mill, no matter how well it was built, nor how large were the capital invested. And certainly with just such a loose system of managing our schools, we ought not to demand that they accomplish every thing. They should, however, do this one thing—they should teach, by daily example and practice, by theory and habitual use, the correct and appropriate usages of our good old Mother Tongue, free alike from vulgarisms, provincialisms, and solecisms.

To do this will require a good amount of patience, and a large investment of determination and energy on the part of the whole community, and especially on the part of the teachers and committee. But it is an investment of labor and watchfulness—that will at once produce a large return of profit. It will be seen in all places, in the school room, in the play grounds, in the streets, at home, and in all the haunts of the children, and instead of rude and coarse and inelegant expressions and phrases, there will be heard good English, undefiled, coming out of the mouths of all—the babes and the sucklings, even—to be a praise and an honor to the zeal and faithfulness of those who have sought to produce it. To promote the special end of our schools—for in our commonwealth we need this teaching of English more and more every day—and it ought to be in connection with what has been before named, the great business in all our teaching—the answer of every question by every scholar must be watched with an eagle eye, and the pronunciation of every word must be marked by a critical ear. A good Pronouncing Dictionary should be on the teacher's desk, and he should consult it hundreds of times daily, and encourage and compel, if need be, his pupils to consult it

still oftener. Nothing wrong in pronunciation should be allowed to escape detection, and every improper word should be at once noticed and driven out of the neighborhood. Sentences should be made to be correct, so far at least as the agreement of verbs or pronouns with their subjects or antecedents is concerned, and ideas, also, should be exactly stated, and that too in choice and pure English words.

Above all, the use of that intolerable slang that disfigures so much of our current conversation, should be condemned to perpetual banishment, under the severest literary penalties. For if there is one thing that does more than any other to debase the soul and prepare the mind for the reading, with delight and awful damage both to the taste and morals, of that most abominable literary—no, not literary, since it is a sin against the whole republic of letters to call it literary, a word expressive of elegance as well as intelligence—that diabolical trash, now so current in cheap newspapers, magazines, novelettes and other printed nuisances, which are hawked about the streets and in railroad cars and depots, to the annoyance and disgust of all pure men—that thing is the allowing, and often the encouragement, of this use of our common slang and flash words and phrases, of late so alarmingly rife among our growing boys—and sometimes our girls. It is often laughed at, as though it were really an indisputable evidence of talent and wit, and as though the boy, who could be expert in its use and application, was thus displaying unmistakable tokens of great genius, and was surely destined to be the celebrity of his age. But if he is to become such, we may be certain that he will be celebrated only for his baseness of soul, and depravity of manners and morals; since he is already debased in thought and language, or he could not use it without blushing for very shame. The too common use of these slang phrases every where—the pulpit sometimes, and oftener in Congress and at the bar and on the stump, in the political newspaper and electioneering pamphlet, in the parlor and the workshop, is one of the most disastrous among the many signs of ill omen, which should cause the patriot and the moralist to fear for the future of our country and race.

Let it be branded and denounced every where, and let the teacher implant a thorough hatred and disgust for it, in the very soul of every child that has the good fortune to be entered as a pupil, and instructed in our benevolent public schools, and we may hope for the time, when pure minds shall not wherever they go be offended and poisoned by its vile breath and polluting presence.

Our schools ought to be models in the correct use of words, and in

the grammatical construction of sentences, as they are fast becoming models in thorough discipline and government. But we are obliged to acknowledge that a dancing school, a ball room, or even the theater, where good dramas—not vile slang comedies—are acted, is often a better school of language than they. It is a shame to us to be compelled to make such an admission. Yet such is the fact; and no good can come by its longer concealment. We must look at the naked truth as it stands before us, and set ourselves resolutely about providing a remedy for it. And that remedy is very obvious, and very easy too, to patient and Argus-eyed labor. The teacher must himself use elegant English, and thus by example, by precept, and by continual drill, induce his pupils to follow his own good practice. He should make it a part of his daily duty to correct false, loose, inaccurate, inelegant, modes of speech and pronunciation; and he should never, by reason of a vain ambition to teach the higher branches, overlook this most profitable and most necessary department of a good education.

#### TEACHING TO WRITE THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

Still another branch of our language is sadly—almost totally—neglected, the learning to write good and grammatical sentences. Composition writing is often practiced, but most commonly is so practiced as to lead the pupil to hate the very thought of writing. It should, however, be taught as a necessary part of daily duty, not by requiring long themes on “Education,” “Virtue,” “Temperance,” “Spring,” “War,” and the like; but by drawing out from the scholars short and easy, well constructed and intelligent sentences, on such objects and topics as they are daily seeing or thinking upon; sometimes inducing them to write their various requests in the form of notes, and again encouraging them to write letters of business or forms of notes and answers to questions. In this way they will be made to love writing, or putting their thoughts on paper, just as they love talking; and the careful writing of a few sentences in this way every day, will do a great deal to insure order and method in thinking, accuracy in spelling, correctness in syntax, and carefulness in the use of words,—more, in fact, than can be accomplished in any other way.

A remark which ought to be made somewhere, may as well be made here, in reference to the effect of this practice of frequent writing on the habits of the pupils in all their future business life. Nothing is better calculated to enable men to spell all the common words

in current use in business correspondence, than the frequent writing of letters of the sort above spoken of. Scholars may learn to spell almost infallibly every word "put out," or dictated, or pronounced to them by the teacher, and yet they will make most ludicrous blunders when they are compelled to write those same words, while they are thinking of them. Were it proper, we might give illustrations on this point, which would make every reader smile audibly, there would be no necessity to go beyond the archives of the office in which this Report is written. The letters of trustees of school districts, and other school officers,—not always excepting the letters of School Committees themselves—would supply what would be amply and more than sufficient to point the moral we wish to enforce. If teachers required their pupils to write something every day, and, after it had been corrected carefully, to copy it neatly, they would not write letters to ask advice about "*the propper moode of kollecing deastrickt tackes*;" neither would they write to "*purtishion a cord into law for the readdress of surtin greevinsez*;" nor would they speak of "*the morrill karickter of a skoul teechar*;" and sundry other things never before "attempted in prose or in rhyme." If this method of simple business composition were a constant practice, from the time the scholars begin to write, till they leave the school for business, they would not begin a letter thus: "*estgreenWich—I Take my pen In hand*;" for they would learn the use of Capital letters and the proper mode of commencing, writing, punctuating and ending a letter, as well as how it should be folded and superscribed. And besides, they would learn exactly what they are to practice almost every day in their after lives.

Now it is with these things just as it is with every thing else. Men do not learn much simply by thinking over the theory. They must put their theories, whatever they are, into practice; and that not once alone, nor yet twenty times, but a hundred, and sometimes more, before they can be called expert, and ready in the use of those theories, and especially in the application of them. It is still more strikingly true that children do not—and from the very nature of their minds they cannot—learn by being told *how* to do a thing. *They must do it.* By beginning early in life and going over and over again with the duty that they are daily to perform, and by this process alone, can they be made to be rapid, accurate—infallible almost—writers and transactors of business public and private. This topic, however, is so well treated in the Report by the Principal of the Normal School, that I forbear to dwell longer upon it. And the remedy is so plain that it

seems hardly to merit the space already devoted to it. It was deemed best and even necessary to say so much, because, from its very simplicity, it seems likeliest to be neglected; because facts do show the evil to be so great; and also because there is so great a temptation, both to scholars and teachers, to overlook it in a laudable desire to learn so much of the higher branches, and of what is called practical. But we hold that nothing is so practical, and so necessary to be done correctly and elegantly as that which we are required to do every day in our lives.

We have only one other branch of this elegant and refining study of the English language to mention. This is the arrangement of its words in sentences, and their figurative and symbolic meaning. We often find a word used in a sense widely different from its primitive signification, and every scholar in our common schools ought, before he is discharged from them, to be instructed somewhat on this subject. A great part of the beauty of poetry and oratory consists altogether in this figurative use of words. A word which, as commonly understood, applies only to one thing or quality, is applied to another, and brings with itself a halo of beauty to crown it, and conveys a deeper and more instructive lesson. This study is indeed a branch of Rhetoric, as studies are divided and marked off into our school treatises. But it is, notwithstanding, a part, and a very necessary and pleasing part, of the great and useful study of the English language, and it opens the doors of the wide regions of literature to the delighted research of those who most of all would profit thereby.

This will complete the study of our own language, and should occupy some portion of each year of the pupil's attendance at school. And it could not fail to return an abundant harvest to reward the zealous teacher or the efficient committee, who should pursue such a course to its termination. It would be teaching in all its branches "how to speak and write the English language correctly;" it would be improving the faculties of observing, of judging, of attention, of memory, and of imagination; and would, while it was conveying rich lessons of information, also impart to all our pupils in our common schools a degree of that elegance and polish which it is claimed the study of the classics affords to students at college. Such systematic and thorough study of our mother tongue is not now performed in our schools, but it might be begun at once. It cannot be left to the teachers alone. These are not employed long enough in any one place, as a general rule, to inaugurate it; and there is an impossibility in one man's carrying forward the plans and half accomplished designs of another with whom he has

no opportunity of consultation, and whose methods of teaching and arrangement he must guess at from such hints of information as the scholars can give who are necessarily totally destitute of any comprehensive knowledge of the whole machinery of the school, even when well informed as to the specific times at which recitations occur. The school committees of the towns must therefore adopt a plan for school studies and must see that every teacher follows it at least in its main features. Here again we find as we do everywhere, the absolute need of a most rigid and efficient system of school visitation and supervision.

### ETYMOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS.

The etymology and the definition of words is very much forgotten, among the multitude of our modern school studies. We act here in the spirit of true Dogberrys, and seem to believe that a knowledge of the meaning, the power, and the beauty of our English words "comes by nature," and, thus the origin and history of our words, we seem entirely to ignore. How full of interest might a reading lesson often be made, if the teacher only knew how to instruct the class to use a good Defining and Etymological Dictionary, in which they could ascertain the composition of a word; from what language it came; through what channel it was imported; for what purposes it was first used; and how it has changed its forms and signification! Send them to ascertain the origin and derivation, the changes in form, and the true meaning of the word *People*. Let them know, as they can be shown from almost any large dictionary, how it seems to have come, through the French in the form of *Peuple*, from the Latin in *Populus*, which is only the Roman spelling of the Greek  $\pi\omicron\lambda\upsilon\varsigma$ , with the first syllable reduplicated; its original meaning signifies *many*. Then let the forms it has assumed be hunted up, how Brunne first spelled it *popille*, Wickliff *pople*, Chaucer *peple* and *peopleish*, Gower, in the 15th century, and the Bible of 1551, spell it as now, *people*, since when it has undergone no changes. The word was probably imported by the Normans, and was used for some time with almost its original Greek meaning, which it still, in a great measure, retains, conveying, along with the idea of numbers, something, also, of ignorance and ill-breeding. Now let it be clearly defined as to its present use and meaning, taking care to show how it differs from the words *mankind*, *nation*, *citizens*, and others which are sometimes loosely used as nearly synonymous with it. After this may very properly come exercises up-

on its various compounds or derivatives, with its prefixes and their significations. Then sentences may be formed in which these words are used according to correct custom ; and, if it is thought best, the pupil may be required to write out, in the form of a composition or thesis, the substance of what has been gone through with by the scholar in these various exercises upon this word, or whatever other one has been used. In this manner the pupil is taught how to investigate a subject for himself, how to think on a given topic, and that to good purpose ; how to command his own attention, and at the same time how to arrange his ideas, and to commit them to paper for his own or another's future use.

The course here recommended in investigating the origin, meaning, etymology and current use of words, is independent of all books, technically called text books. It requires a good dictionary, like Webster's or Richardson's, and an Encyclopedia, with some good treatise on Etymology. And one of its great recommendations is that the scholar, with a little advice from the teacher, must guide himself through its whole course ; and also that it will teach him self reliance and encourage him to invent methods for himself, and to search for profitable work to be done under the stimulus of his enthusiasm.

Defining words—not however by single synonymes, but by their correct use in sentences—is a fine exercise. Let the child be encouraged to write a sentence containing some familiar word—as *spell*. He will write thus, perhaps, "I can *spell* words." Here is no definition ; but there lies one asleep in the child's mind, or else he would not have used the word properly. The teacher's business is now to wake up that definition without frightening the child's thoughts and scattering them. How can this be done ? You therefore must not say to him, "Define *spell*." "Define" is a very hard word to be thrown a little fellow. But ask him, "*how* do you spell words ?" and he will probably tell you at once, "I can *spell* words by telling their letters," and he has then hit the exact dictionary definition of spelling monosyllabic words. If now you want a more comprehensive definition which shall include all words, you ask him to spell *house*, *wagon*, *chair*, *village*, *wisdom*, and perhaps others. This prepares him to answer your next question, which may be, "Do you do exactly the same things when you spell *house* or *chair*, that you do when you spell *wagon* or *village* ?" He does not quite comprehend you, which shows that he is thinking. So he spells thoughtfully now, thus, "*c-h-a-i-r* CHAIR ; *w-a-g* WAG, *o-n* ON, WAGON ; *h-o-u-s-e* HOUSE ; *v-i-l* VIL, *l-a-g-e* LAGE, VILLAGE ;" and then replies, "No, sir. In spelling *wagon* I tell the



syllables too." No let him put the two answers together, and he has a nearly perfect definition, "I can spell words by telling their letters and syllables."

Such a definition thus invented or found out by the child, is worth a hundred looked out, by means of the Dictionary. And it is following the only philosophical method of learning; in fact is no more nor less than putting the knowledge, which the child has gained in the school room and outside of it by the daily use of words, to practical use and service. He has heard a word spoken in its proper connection so many times, that he *knows* its usage almost infallibly; in your teaching of definitions, you wish to aid him to tell what he knows. To do this, you must by all means encourage him to bring into service what he has learned somewhere else. It is too often the case that nothing learned out of the school room is allowed to be brought into it, and more frequently, what is learned within it cannot be carried out and made to work in the great business of life. But we must remember that school is only a part of life, and the work without and within it, should each be applied in the other place. Make the pupil, therefore, use his out-door learned knowledge to aid him in his school learning; and his school acquisitions in performing the work to be done in the world without. Thus will he find out or construct for himself every logical and useful definition of things and methods of performing labor, and he will be certain that he knows whatever processes he has thus understood or gone over. Avoid, by all means discouraging him by very hard work, and especially very tedious work.

No branch of school study is more promising, and no school exercise can be more profitable, than this just recommended of requiring and encouraging every scholar to give exact and perspicuous definitions of the words he uses. Many of the perplexing controversies that embitter the hearts of members of a christian community, undoubtedly grow out of a want of exactness in the definition of the terms employed; or rather, they grow out of an inaccurate or an imperfect knowledge of the real meaning and force of those words. When an idea is obtained it is generally accompanied by some word or form of words by which it is expressed, and it depends very much on two things whether this expression can be made clear and explicit. These are, first a definite understanding of the thing; second, a certain knowledge of the word which men have agreed to use for the expression of that idea. Hence the necessity of carefully studying to impart definite conceptions of the meaning of words. Now words have no meaning other than by com-

**On agreement.** We agree that a word or form of words shall convey given idea ; and this agreement must be known to those who undertake to use that word or form, before it can be made to have any significance whatever.

Besides words have a great number of various meanings, and if they are used loosely and without a very accurate aim, these different meanings, or shades of meaning, will confuse rather than instruct. To make a sentence confused and absolutely unintelligible, it needs but the use of two epithets of apparently the same, yet of really different meanings. There are then awakened in the mind of the hearer two incongruous if not inconsistent ideas and he immediately falls in perplexity as to what idea was in the mind of the speaker. In such a case the emphasis or gesture alone can resolve the doubt. And where a single epithet is used, but not with its exact and ordinary signification, very frequently nothing but the tone of voice or manner of the speaker can indicate what was really intended to be conveyed. But when the words are written, and are thus completely cut off from the informing and illustrating power of personal presence and sympathy, they must, either by their own force and quickly understood sense, or by their readily known connection, give the idea intended ; otherwise they are not only useless but an actual puzzle and a nuisance.

The accurate and appropriate use of words, if learned at all, must be learned early in life. Very few persons have time, after twenty years of age, to devote to the study of words and their significations. The cares of business and the necessity of providing the means of daily support, prevent their giving much time to the correction even of the common faults of ordinary conversation. If they have for the whole of their formation period been contracting careless habits as to the use of words, neglecting to study and apply them properly, with beauty and power as to their meaning, and giving no thought as to the choice selection and forcible, perspicuous and musical arrangement, the chances are vastly against the correction of errors, and still more numerous are the odds that they will never acquire accuracy, much less elegance of expression. The mind learns words early, and forms of expression become fixed in the memory so deeply in childhood, that it is almost impossible, even with care and culture, to eradicate them, especially when grossly inaccurate. If we are to hear from the next generation pure English, in good terse English idioms, with appropriateness in the choice of terms and precision in the meanings of words we must teach it to the children, and particularly in its definitions.

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Thus shall we make the people themselves give attention first to the

thought they would express, and next to the words that are to "body forth" that thought and make it visible to others. We thus inspire in the community a love for and a desire to attain purity and grace in the use of language—a thing which will do much towards the attainment of propriety and elegance in thought, and consequently of morality and virtue in conduct. All these very promising results are directly promoted by teaching the correct definition and the truthful use of words. And they may and must be attended to in our schools daily. In fact they are not such schools as the people need, and must have, unless they do constantly tend to secure these great ends.

### STUDY MUST BE A PLEASURE.

It is not worth the while to pursue this train of thought and remark. Nor is it best, at this distance from the beginning of this Report, to enlarge upon the necessity of teaching other branches and their methods. I have spoken of that which was fundamental and most often neglected, and the temptations to neglect which are most irresistible. I have also spoken somewhat—in scattered hints and fragments, to be sure—of the methods to be pursued in doing this great duty. It will not be entirely useless, it is believed, to reiterate what every teacher is likeliest to forget, or if not forgetting it, oftenest fails to practice. All this teaching of language, its uses, its definitions, its force and beauty, must be made pleasing. A child cannot be made to feel an interest in what is not a positive pleasure. A boy will not even play with top, marbles or ball, with sled, kite or skates; a girl will not play with doll, tea-set or hoop, with pictures, toys or baby-house, unless there is a positive pleasure actually gushing up like a fountain every moment from all parts of the sport. The infant cannot be made to take food from any sense of duty, and it would be hard work for a man, with reason and conscience strongly developed, to eat daily without the sense of hunger and with no pleasurable sensation upon the palate. How, then, can he be forced to feed on knowledge systematically made dry as saw-dust—if not bitter as the apples of Sodom to him? Fortunately children, as a general thing, have more common sense than the good lady, to whom the waggish proprietor of a circulating library loaned a dictionary, telling her it was the most interesting and useful book he had, and the one that authors most frequently consulted, asking her at the same time to read it carefully and give him her opinion of it. She read it,

and affirmed that it was very interesting, but for her part she thought it lacked connection, and that the story was not easy to be understood. She must have been taught in some school where the teacher made his pupils study as a matter of simple duty, and not because it was pleasant ; and the process had driven from her mind all the common sense that as a child she possessed. But scholars naturally have sense enough to feel—if they do not know it—that what is dull and tedious cannot be useful or very profitable. They can feel, even in their inmost natures, that in a world of such magnificent beauty, where every thing has an apparent and a ready use and a still deeper significance, whatever is fit or necessary to be learned, ought also, in all cases, to be made pleasing. And they demand it. Every thing in them that is good and noble, rebels if such is not the case with learning.

There may be no royal road to science, as it is said, but there is such a thing as making the journey over a very long and even tedious road, eminently pleasing and profitable, by means of good company and delightful employment. And how wise are the arrangements of an Infinite Providence in this respect ! How easily is a child pleased, and how quick can the highest delight be made to fill his soul ! Every bright spot on the gown of his nurse or the dress of his mother is to him a beauty and a joy. Every bit of litter even on the carpet is amusing. Every ray of sunlight dancing into his nursery window is full of glowing wonder, and produces in his bosom thrills of pleasure more apparent than the pulsations of his bounding heart. Every bird is a messenger bringing from a better world a brimming cup of rapture to refresh his thirsty soul. Every sound of music carries his heart away on the wings of ecstasy to a golden region of bliss. Every word, every tone of love, every look of interest in his sports, every attempt to aid him in what he is doing, all are to him better than treasures of good things poured into his lap. How appropriately does the poet allude to this very useful capability of children to find pleasure every where and in all things—even the commonest and the rudest. He may have meant it for satire, but it is not satire. It is the divinity in our natures that makes us all—children of few years and of many—able to find solace from suffering, and pleasure in the things and events transpiring around us.

“ Behold the child, by Nature’s kindly law,  
Pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw ;  
Some livelier plaything gives the youth delight,  
A little louder, but as empty quite.”

And when a child is so easily and so profitably pleased, can there be any reason in the nature of the case and in the circumstances surrounding it, which shall justify or excuse any teacher in making school a nuisance and knowledge a disgust, to the loving, trusting, pleasure-craving, honest-hearted little ones, who are so ready to be delighted and made happy, and so eager and easy to be profited thereby? To such a question there can be only one answer. The teacher who leads or allows a child to dislike learning and school discipline, is not really fit for his place. He may be permitted to be there as a temporary substitute for the man or woman whom all desire and whom all should seek for, until the loving and interesting teacher can be found; but he ought, even then, to be made to be ashamed of himself and of his blundering stupidity.

Let this, then, be settled, that the teacher is bound to make every fact and every lesson he would impart interesting to his pupils, and that if he cannot do this he is to leave the profession as speedily as public odium can drive him out. But let him remember that there are a thousand ways of pleasing children, without his enacting the buffoon, or fostering a diseased taste in his scholars. He need not lay aside his proper dignity and descend to amuse them with old almanac stories, or newspaper conundrums, nor with harlequin shows and exhibitions. There is, to one who is willing—as a teacher of youth always should be—a vast field from which to select profitable amusement for every mind in his school. There are pictures, stories from the Bible, from the life of Washington and Revolutionary times, local traditions, the wonders of foreign lands, the marvels of science; and all this, by a very little study on the instructor's part, may be woven into riddles for the little ones, prepared as compositions for the older ones, and made into reading or *telling* lessons for others, till the interest in the school shall be made to glow and to burn like a furnace.

#### OTHER STUDIES AND THEIR METHODS.

Especially can the study next introduced into our public schools after reading has been partially learned—the study of Geography, accompanied, as it often is, by history or mental arithmetic, be made to subserve this great purpose of imparting pleasure and awakening interest. But it must not be studied as now it is. The children in our schools now *study* Geography, we admit; and often with a real vengeance are they driven to it. But they do not *learn* it. They do al-

most any thing with it but that—the very thing and the only thing that they attempt. By the examinations of candidates for the Normal School, it is found that this branch of very great usefulness, and which might be made so interesting, is not by any means mastered so as to be remembered. Scholars are known to have been in the classes in Geography, and at their head for years, who have only remembered to forget it all. Children must learn this, and as soon as the scholar is able to read by spelling over to himself the words of a book, most teachers set him at work to commit to memory some description, or definition, or account of some public transaction, or some table of cities and population and he is expected to be able to repeat the words as they occur in the book before him. This is always a hard task, and generally disgusts the little one with school. It is, in fact, repeating the trial by which the comedian Foote confounded a man of wonderful memory, who boasted that he could commit and repeat almost any amount of words in an incredibly short time. Foote wrote with a pencil two or three lines about “the Joblillies and the grand Panjandrum himself; and how she imprudently married the barber, and sought a cabbage leaf to make an apple pie; when the bear popped his head into the shop,” and the like. The momorizer was all at fault, and gave out in despair of being able to retain and repeat what had neither sense, connection, melody nor adaptation. But the child must commit a string of words and phrases, to him as totally wanting in meaning, in music, and in utility, as were those so wittily strung together by the artful comedian; and it would not be unsafe to add that sometimes these sentences and definitions thus required to be learned are both untrue and ungrammatical. What child can understand this sentence, over which I have seen cars pulled, because the long and hard words had not been learned, with ten similar sentences, in one half-forenoon? “Parallels of latitude are small circles drawn round the earth parallel to the equator.” No previous explanation of small circles or the equator had been given, and none was then attempted. The child—a boy of six—had been ordered the forenoon before to get so much, and he had to sit on his seat, without even a look of encouragement, and learn it. When the appointed hour came he was found “deficient”—as any sensible child ought to have been—and with a rude pull at his ears, and with rough and sneering words, he was remanded to his seat again to study at nothing.



## THE STUDY OF GEOGRAPHY.

It is almost impossible to say how extremely unphilosophical and unprofitable are the methods of teaching Geography—one of the noblest of sciences and one of the most bewitching of studies—in our common schools. It is made by the majority of teachers, a mere matter of verbal memory of boundaries, names, and figures. Descriptions of arbitrary and imaginary lines—such as circles of latitude, longitude, equators and tropics—which even an astronomer and a philosopher finds it difficult to conceive—are made the beginning of the study. Hard and crabbed definitions of peninsulas, isthmuses, promontories, of oceans, straits, channels and the like, are stuffed into the child's mind without their pictures, or even the notion necessary to cause their meanings to be understood, much less to be remembered. Then a list of the towns in Japan, or of the seas and volcanoes of Kamtschatka, or of the rivers in China, or Siam, or of the peaks of the Andes mountains, is demanded under penalty of reproof and discredit. While short and very confused accounts of the climate, productions, soil and surface of particular countries, with the character, numbers, religion, and peculiarities of their inhabitants, and those countries too, are such as the pupils have no interest in knowing about. All this and more is required with a nonchalance that would be praise-worthily ludicrous indeed, were it a jest and not practiced upon unoffending childhood.

What is the remedy for this state of things? It is very simple to a teacher who knows something of Geography himself, and who has the tact to tell what he knows. What can be more interesting than the knowledge of the variety of climate, surface, productions, inhabitants and forms of government and religion of different countries, and the modes of communication, commerce, exchange and intercourse among them, to one who wishes to acquire it? How grand is the study of the great oceans, with their tides and currents; of the mighty mountains and their rich treasures of gold and precious stones, and their far richer treasures of rain and snow; of the lordly rivers with their refreshing waters and fertile basins; and of the places of olden history and the fields of ancient renown, to one whose affections and interest has been awakened in it? But all this goes upon the supposition that the desire for knowledge has been born in the soul. And unless this desire is first awakened into life, it will be labor lost, or nearly so, to attempt to give the information. You might just as well expect the new-born

child to help himself to food before his instinct feels the monitions of hunger, as to expect the child or the man to crave and labor to gain knowledge, the want of which he has never felt, and the beauty of which he has never seen.

Now how is the teacher to prepare the minds of scholars for the reception of all this knowledge and to make them labor assiduously to acquire it? Let the teacher bring in a book of travels, a history or a newspaper, and at a proper time—not too often or too long—let himself or some good reader among the scholars, read the account of some beautiful and interesting land, and of adventures in that region. When the pupils are deeply interested in the narrative, and are deriving useful information from it, let them be asked how a person would travel to reach that country? In what direction? By what mode of conveyance? Through what cities, nations, waters, seas, or oceans? What kind of money would there be used? What productions are exchanged between that country and our own? And a hundred other questions of the like sort, such as will suggest themselves to any teacher's mind. Or he may let the reader ask the questions to-day, with the understanding that the scholars are to write them down, and bring in the answers to-morrow, or at the farthest by the next Saturday, and that the one who brings them in first, or the most of them first, correctly answered, shall select and read the first piece, or propose some service pleasing and desirable to the school. Here you always begin at home and stretch away to any part of the earth that you desire. You travel by railroad, by stage-coach, by horse and wagon, by steamboat, by packet ship, by merchant vessel, or by whatever is best adapted to your business or inclination.

Another exercise that may grow out of this reading in the school room of extracts from these books or newspapers, may be to ask for the distinguished men now living in a particular country, or for the events that have in past times there transpired, and the persons engaged in them. Thus do children learn to desire, and the desire of knowledge is only one step, and that step a short one, from the acquisition of any necessary or pleasing information.

How to do this cannot be told here. This must be left to the teacher's ingenuity. After this desire is awakened, the arrangement of the facts belonging to the noble science will be a matter of great consequence. Shall this be done by beginning, as is now common, with the astronomical lines drawn arbitrarily upon the earth's surface, and continuing with definitions of "natural and political divisions"? or by beginning at home, about the school room, the town, and the vicinity?

This latter is the only natural and proper method of presenting a branch of science so profitable and so interesting. It must be begun by something already known and desirable. The child knows the road to school—the brook by the mill—the boundaries of the farm—the school district too—and these are realities to him. From this knowledge as a base of operations—to use a military phrase—he can go on to conquer all knowledge of all the earth that lies adjacent to these well known objects and divisions. Here is the point of approach to every other geographical idea. And it is believed that no other way is the proper one. The books of geography cannot of course begin here for every child in every school district in the land. But the teacher can and must make this adaptation. He is paid to do it. It is his profession, and if he does it not he is all at fault.

### THE METHOD OF QUESTIONS.

A teacher must know how to ask questions. For of all the stimulators to the acquisition of knowledge, of all fertilizers of the brains of childhood, youth or age, and of all the quickeners of thought and invention, those sentences that end with the *point* of interrogation are decidedly the best. Such points are soon felt, and never felt but to profit, when skilfully used. And in all that has been said of methods in teaching the subjects already recommended, it has been one special aim to keep this important usage before the minds of all who interest themselves in schools—whether they are teachers, examiners, visitors, and parents, or mere lookers-on, desirous of the truest prosperity of our schools. Questions give the whole life and zest to a school exercise, and as a teacher can use them effectually, so will be his power to interest, to arouse, to instruct. But they cannot be used by an idle or a lazy man; nor by one who does not study to the very bottom of every topic he attempts to teach. And by them alone without text book—aided by a blackboard for himself, and a slate and pencil, or pen, ink, and paper for the scholar, almost any subject may be well taught, and be made to glow with interest. I gave an illustration of the proper method of questions, under the head of teaching definitions, and it may be well to speak further here.

That is only one example of the true method to be pursued in teaching by questions, and it will apply to the business of giving instruction on every other subject. It is leading the pupil to invent or find out for himself whatever he is required to recite, and it demands that as

soon as a scholar is set to learn a task from the book or commit a lesson, that lesson or task shall be explained to him before he sits down to it ; and it also plainly suggests that almost everything is best explained to a child—as indeed it is to everybody—by asking questions which he can easily answer for himself. This was the method of Socrates and of Plato, founded on one of the most profound and fascinating of all philosophical conjectures, that all our knowledge consists but of fragmentary reminiscences of the magnificent intellectual treasures which we possessed in a previous existence ; and that it needs but the proper questions, put to us under the proper combination of circumstances, to bring to light all those treasures, buried though they are, under no man knows what depths of rubbish and ruin. Ridicule this doctrine as we may—and if we use it for any other serious purpose than a figure of speech, it is supremely ludicrous—yet still its virtual assumption does indicate the only philosophical method of imparting knowledge to children ; and it does indicate, that a thoughtful and a skillful teacher may communicate almost any information he wishes to impart by very simple questions ; and the greater part of these questions shall not be in the category of those very silly leading ones, which the pupil may answer, when half asleep, by grunting out “ *yes*,” or “ *no*.” Where the information to be given is a *fact*, as “ the population of New York,” “ the name of the Queen of England,” or the like, of course the only way is to tell it at once, yet here the desire for the information should first be aroused. But where the information is of that kind which calls into operation the reasoning or the judging faculty, then this method of putting questions will always accomplish its purpose of leading the scholar to find out for himself all that is required of him ; provided he has rightly gone over the premises or elements necessary for the reasoning process which is to develop or lead to the conclusion.

To this method of interrogation or questioning, Demosthenes owed much of his power over his audiences. How rapidly does he, after simply stating a few well known facts, hurl the easiest questions upon his hearers, and never stopping for an answer, how adroitly and how naturally does he follow one question—unanswerable but in a single way—with another bolder still, and still more decisive of the point in hand, till at last one final and irresistible question brings the minds of his countrymen to one inevitable conclusion. Their hearts and souls take fire from the spark thus awakened within them ; and springing to their feet, they cry with one voice, “ Lead us against Phillip ! Conquest now or death ! ” It is the question alone that has called up the

old spirit of Marathon and Salamis, which they had forgotten was slumbering in their bosoms. And so it is with questions put by the teacher. They wake up in the very soul of the pupil, what neither he nor his friends had ever dreamed was sleeping within him, and give him a positive and available knowledge of what had been to him all unimagined before.

But I must be understood as making a wide distinction between this, which I will call the *question method by the teacher*, and that other methods—of late years so common, so fashionable and so much admired by lazy teachers—of questions and answers, all beautifully printed with fine and neatly leaded type—two sizes for the splendid effect of contrast—in the text book which the scholars are to study and recite. If any one thing in school book making is more hateful than any other, it is this practice of making a disgusting hash of what a child is to learn, by dividing and dis severing what property belongs together, as some of these printed questions must do ; and by uniting other things which never ought to be brought together until they are conjoined in the scholar's mind by his own wit. One great objection to this printing of questions and answers in the same book is, that it does not give the learner any opportunity to think and compare, and none either to remember or invent. Everything that he wishes to inquire for is asked by the book before he has time to feel the want of that knowledge ; and everything that he could possibly ask to know, is answered before he begins to want the answer. All this must produce so many repetitions that he tires of having every desire literally cloyed before it is more than half awakened, and every want absolutely annihilated before it is fairly felt. Away, then, with books that have printed questions and answers to match in them.

Where the teacher asks the questions, however, the case is far different. Then the child must ransack his memory for what he learned yesterday ; he must compare one fact known with another, and judge of their similarity or difference, when so compared with one another, or with a third fact ; he must reason, and also make suppositions, or use his imagination or invention, and compare the results thus obtained with what he knows ; and after this he must draw conclusions. Thus he is cultivating his whole mind, and arousing within him a power to learn for himself without a teacher ; and he is both preparing the knowledge gained, to be remembered, and fitting his memory to receive and never lose hold of it. Let the teacher try this method on a story book which the child read once, and in haste, a week ago, and understood, instead of asking him to recite what he has been studying all the present fore-

noon, and therefore has read twenty times, at least, about "the tropics"—those flaming barriers in knowledge against which so many little ones bring up—and which are said to be "circles drawn round the earth parallel to the Equator, and twenty-three and a half degrees north and south of it." See how quick you can get the whole story with notes and comments of his own—and very sensible ones too—and how you can *not* get any information as to the whereabouts of the tropics at all. He once knew the story somewhere; but the tropics—with all the book's questions, and pictures of palm trees, deserts, tigers and elephants, and its diagram of circles, entire or dotted, straight or curved—he has never in all his existence seen. His eye may have seen the *words* which define them, and the diagram, the map and the picture. But *he* has never looked upon nor known *them*. Now tell him about the tropics, and get him to *know* them—if it occupies all your leisure time for a whole week—and then ask him questions about them and see if he can answer you. There is no difficulty, for you are asking and he is telling about what he knows, and what is interesting to him.

The study of Geography has been used here merely as an illustration of this *question method*, not of books, but of the teacher. It can be applied to the Reading lessons, and will suggest to the scholar the correct pronunciation of words, the true stress of voice to be used, the proper inflections on words and at the pauses, the just force and degree of accent and emphasis, as well as the definition of words, and the general meaning scope and purpose of the paragraph read. Of course questions will not always suggest their answers. But in these cases the scholar may be sent to the Dictionary, to the Biography, the Scientific Treatise, the Encyclopedia, or to the Almanac or Newspaper to hunt up the information required. Every question asked to-day need not necessarily be answered to-day, to-morrow, or this week. If it is followed so as always to be in sight, the interest of the hunt will absolutely increase with the length of time it is protracted; and when at last the true and distinct answer is caught and brought home in triumph after a week's toil, it will always remain to be a trophy of the great victory. As no school exercise or study is more pleasing than that which stimulates activity and pleasurable excitement, so none is more profitable, or accumulates more lasting fruits.

This method is in accordance with the nature and operations of the human mind which cannot retain that which it does not understand, and which tires and seeks to fly from everything involved in mystery, unless there be a reasonable probability of an interesting solution of all

that mystery. Then it becomes awakened and aroused to inquire, to search, to labor, till it discovers the whole secret that lies before it. The proper method of the teacher therefore is first to make a meaning, a power, a significance, or a beauty, come down and brood over and fill with life and attraction every combination of dead words and letters, which he sets before the learner. The child's Understanding is the first of its strictly intellectual faculties that operates, and is therefore the first one of them all to be furnished with aliment, to be stimulated by culture, and trained by discipline. The affections of his heart, do indeed burst into flower and produce fruit before this power to understand has made any great progress. This indeed begins its inquiries as soon as the eyes open and derive pleasure from the many colored light—as soon as the ears drink in the sweetness of voices mellowed by joy and love—as soon as the senses of touch or taste find satisfaction from the contact of that which brings to them profit or delight. But although it begins thus early to inquire and to find out yet it is for a time developed quite slowly; and perhaps it is not too much to say that one great cause of its slow development is found in the fact that we do not take special pains to give it correct answers to the ten-thousand pertinent questions which is daily asking.

#### THE TRUE METHOD—CORRECTNESS.

The child comes here without knowledge, and has a nature such as makes it impossible to proceed in the manner in which so many parents and teachers have proceeded and still insist on following—that is, the method of *implanting* ideas. The mind cannot be a passive recipient of any thing. It is a living soul. It has a freedom of activity, and if it will *know* it must first *act*. And this power to act is also the power to know and understand. All its knowledge—or faith—must come by hearing—or by the exercise of some of its faculties. The body has eyes through which the soul sees the outward forms and semblances of bodies, forms and colors, and the mind has the organ—so it may be called—of understanding, which is the soul's immaterial eye with which it sees truth. The proper method of instruction uses this, and seeks to train and sharpen it so that it may be able to see the truth in every thing we would teach, before we demand that the memory shall attempt to retain the form of words which are to embalm that truth. And when the truth is seen by the soul through

this mental organ, it can very easily find both the place and the means of retaining that truth for future use.

That childish explanation of poor recitations, and of his embarrassing hesitation to answer a question—"I know well enough, but I cannot tell it"—is very unphilosophical, though often to the child very real. He had been taught to give more attention to the words in which some truth had been clothed, than to the truth itself; and he had really at one time mastered those words, but not the truth hidden beneath them. When now the words—as they always will—have escaped from the memory, he still feels conscious of an indistinct notion of the thing; and since he first learned that thing by means of those half forgotten words, he imagines that he does still know it. The truth is, he does not now know it, and he never did know it. He did only know the words; and those he still knows,—it is only their connection that he lost,—and a fortunate concurrence of circumstances might restore that connection. The idea or truth he never saw or knew. All that he learned of it was no more than what the words could carry,—a very meager part indeed. Had he, however, been made to see or to understand the truth first, and to know that with a ravishing sense of certainty and delight, he would have been in very small danger of forgetting it; and knowing this idea he would therefore have been in no danger whatever of hesitating for the words in which to express it, or rather for the simple connection and arrangement of those words.

We must, therefore, aim to teach them correctly; and after we have done this well, we need have no fears about the word memory just now alluded to; if indeed this accurate fitting of language to ideas which we really possess—not fancy or guess that we possess—is not one great and important branch of correctness. But what is correctness? There can be no doubt that many a teacher fails to accomplish much, solely because he has no sort of conception as to what correctness is. He cannot, therefore, tell when a recitation is well or ill made; nor when a lesson is understood or not. Our question is, in this view, a very important one, and concerns the foundation of all our methods of instruction. A few words devoted to the answer of it may hence be very useful both to teachers and visitors of schools, and also to parents and scholars themselves. For until we understand in what direction truth lies, and something, also, as to the extent and nature of its dominions, we shall by no means be able to ascertain when we have entered its territories, or have been gathering its fruits. To make a complete answer to this question, would be difficult, for



many reasons, but principally on account of its vast extent, and the many modifications our ideas must undergo in order to adapt themselves to the multitude of subjects about which we may inquire. For what is correct and complete as to one topic, is, taken in detail, by no means complete or correct as to a different one. But nevertheless, some general principles, applicable alike to all topics of thought and experience, may be settled in a few words.

Correctness, as applicable to the business of acquiring knowledge, is, in brief, seeing, or, knowing, or understanding things as they are; doing things as they ought to be done; and reasoning rightly from what is known. With the first of these, we are apt to think the teacher has most to do; and yet he is oftenest allowed to neglect all accurate knowledge save that of the words in the text book. A child may understand a thing very well before he can command the words that name it; and for one purpose this is enough. But for the great purpose of school training, it is by no means sufficient. No knowledge is complete till it can be expressed, either by words or by signs; and the man must feel deeply before he reaches the point where he has lost the power of expression. To one, therefore, familiar with the use of words, what is known as a fact or an idea, may be expressed in any copious and civilized language.

But in order that this may be done, it is necessary that the knowledge shall exactly correspond to the fact. There must be no property or quality appreciable to human intelligence left out, and nothing must be added to the category of its characteristics. If it be an object known through the bodily senses, the proper organs, and in the proper number, must report to the understanding the whole of the facts that each legitimately can gather concerning it, and this faculty then must act without bias or influence to make up for itself a correct account concerning what has thus been brought before its tribunal for record, in the archives of the memory. In this work of collecting facts, and using the proper organs of sense great care is needed, and indeed correctness is always better promoted by carefulness and patient examination, than by any fancied natural gift or acumen. Some one quotes Hume as saying, that "all the senses at times deceive us." And he gives an example, thus: a quantity of wax may be made to take the exact form and color of an apple, so that the eye shall without hesitation report it to be one. It may be made to take the delicious odor of the apple, and the smell shall gratefully decide that it is what it seems. Hence he argues all the senses may deceive us. But even in the case of the waxen apple named, there are senses which would correct the error of

the eye, and also as that of the smell. Indeed properly speaking the eyes have in that case committed no mistake. It was their business to note the color and shape alone, and that they did accurately. The smell too did its office without hesitation, and it was guilty of no deception whatever. And if the philosopher made a mistake, and called a lump of wax an apple, it was entirely the fault of his own mind, which did not send another one of its servants—the senses—to make a more thorough examination. Had this mind but willed that the touch or the taste should make an experiment, a correct report would have been made and no error could have been forced upon it.

A more difficult error to correct is seen in the motion of the heavenly bodies, which seem to pass over the flat surface of the earth. It is the eye that reports this apparent motion to us, and erroneously too. But in this case the eye itself corrects its first judgment and gives the exact truth—the eye assisted by instruments indeed—but still the eye does make the proper and just atonement for its hasty conclusions. In the attainment of correctness, therefore, a prime object is to cultivate the senses so that they shall always accurately report their sensations, and that one shall supply the omissions and remedy the blunders of the others. Yet, as the disposition of mind to make this examination is of more consequence than the instrument by which it is made, and as the temper and spirit with which it is carried on is of still greater importance, we must give more attention to the preparation of the mind and heart of the observer than to increasing the delicacy of the senses by which that examination, is to be made. No instrument can enable the dead retina in the eye of the blind to see. And when the soul to appreciate and delight in truth and complete accuracy is wanting or is dull and blunted, there is no power in the man to compel his bodily senses or his mental faculties to search out and labor after what is true in itself and perfect. Every mind has in it a propensity to require a completion of what is begun—a full understanding of what is brought before it. This is one of the noblest of all its faculties, and aids much to display the divinity of its origin. Only by a base education—by repeated rebuke and stern rebuff—can this faculty be made to content itself with a half understanding of any thing. And such is its spontaneous action, that it is among the easiest of all the child's mental powers to cultivate, to discipline, and it will arouse his whole soul into glowing enthusiasm. Any amount of knowledge or discipline that goes no further than simply to train and educate the mere senses, is comparatively worthless for the purpose. What is wanted, is to educate the soul, and all sharp-

ening of the bodily organs is going no deeper than the simple surface. The senses may be made acute, but nothing can grow out of this acumen unless the body is correctly educated and every power of the intellect is so trained and habituated as to act readily and skillfully. Every teacher should value study far more on account of its effect upon the soul of the learner, than for any supposed practical business worth or use which recommends it; and if it does not thus take effect upon the soul of the pupil, and make that accurate, prompt, honest, upright, and energetic, it is either worthless in itself or it is worthlessly taught.

Correctness, as we mean to use the term here, does therefore belong to the soul, and not to the bodily organs. Yet men frequently speak of cultivating the senses, as though disciplining them were the ultimate end of this branch of education. But these can never be properly trained and educated for themselves alone, and any such superficial training commonly has but small influence upon them. The eye, considered as a bodily organ, when made by All-Wise Mechanician, is perfect; and by no care of our own can be made better. It is a telescope—absolutely perfect—and whenever it opens, it pictures within its orb the whole landscape. You cannot educate it to do more, and it will do no less. The near and the distant—the beautiful and the deformed—earth, sky and water—plants, trees, men and human improvements, are, all at once, painted on its immaculate nerve. No experience is required for this eye to take in all these at once and accurately. But it does need a vast amount of education and experience, of judgment and reasoning too, to enable the soul to separate this condensed picture; to take note of each of its parts, to measure the distance of objects from the eye and from one another; to decide about the forms of bodies from seeing their colors alone; and in short, to know visible things from simply feeling the imponderable rays of light when thrown upon the retina. All this is not eye-education or training. It is soul-instruction or discipline. If the eye is adapted to refract the rays of light—as it is—it is then certain that the pictures made on the infant's eye are as perfect as those made on the parent's. Why then is it that a pilot will see the ship's sail on the verge of the ocean, where the landsman sees only the misty haze of mingled sky and water? Why does the artist see beauty where the boor sees only a rocky brook or steep hill-side? for the eye is a similar instrument in both cases, and the one must transmit rays, in the same manner and to the same extent as the other. The answer is simple. The soul behind the eye in one case has been cultivated, and in the other it has

not been. The one man within has learned to take notice of the smallest parts of the picture brought by the eye and laid before him, and he sees in them a significance of some higher beauty ; and the other has never seen nor imagined any use, beauty or significance in them. The one has studied and improved the soul, and has been teaching it to see accurately, even while he slept ; and the other has allowed the mind to sleep even while the eye was open, and drinking in the glories of earth and heaven. Why, too, does the ear of one man bring to him so much joy, through the medium of music and song ; and to another convey nothing but a humdrum sound, pleasing enough to be sure, but more coveted for the purpose of inducing repose, than of bringing to him pleasure ? It all depends on the mind to which the ear so mysteriously leads. If that is awake and well taught and trained, the ear, which is simply dead matter, can no more avoid carrying sounds to the mind, and that correctly, than can a sonorous tube resist or avoid to carry a message spoken in it.

It is, therefore, the mind, properly speaking, and not the senses, that we wish to train. And we must seek to make all our efforts bear on this point, and in this direction. Especially do we wish to seek correctness in all the acts of this soul, for which all our educational labors are performed, and on which they are all to operate. The soul may be taught to know, without at all being trained to act. But this acting should be by no means neglected. Indeed it should be settled that the education or training which does not carry the knowledge so far, that it results in action—right, honest, vigorous, and conscientious—is less than half education—is, in fact, no practical education at all. Here may be found the explanation of what we so often hear said, in depreciation of our schools, that they do not make people better. Now while we believe that every generation of men is growing better, we cannot avoid the conclusion that they are not making improvement commensurate with their opportunities and for the reason that we undertake to educate the bodily organs, to the neglect of the soul—and the intellect to the manifest slight of the will or the power of action. Make the will right—and every sense and faculty will know more, and will also perform more of what men call love, or duty, or labor. And this sort of correctness, is, in short, no more nor less than preparing the mind to discover the best in every thing, and inciting it to aim at perfection in whatever is to be known or to be done. The soul of a boy filled with this idea, has a light within him above the brightness of the sun, that will shed its beams along the pathway in which he is to walk, and

which will be to him more cheering than is the light of day after an arctic winter. It will make him a good student, however dull he may have been at first, and will bring him off successfully from the field of every labor. Only let him once see how glorious is perfection in a small thing, and if his soul does not fall in love with it, he must be a strange child, or the one who showed that perfection must have contrived to distort it so that it did not appear to be perfection. Let truth be seen in her own garments, radiant with immortal beauty, and she will fascinate the heart. But when error steals her robes, and is arrayed in them, it is no wonder that men admire. Condemning erring men for following what seems to be truth, or hiding actual but hard to be understood truth, in a case like this, will not prevent them from going astray. Showing the whole truth, and making it seem a living thing, alone will enable men to discard all erroneous knowledge, and search for the best and noblest, the rightest and purest—in knowing—in acting, in reasoning.

### THE USE OF GOVERNMENT IN SCHOOLS.

In order to accomplish our purposes of forming perfect characters in the souls of the children committed to our schools, we must not, in all our instruction, both intellectual and moral, forget the necessity and beneficial effects of good government. The general design of all government is to aid in forming correct habits, and to set up barriers of restraint against evil tendencies or depraving influences. It also aids in the accomplishment of great purposes, where many persons or things are combined to produce a given result. The beautiful harmony of the heavens could not remain a day were it not for the restraining hand of Jehovah. Order could not be maintained an hour among the objects on the earth's surface if the governing law of gravitation were withdrawn. So of the powers and passions of man's soul. Let but the strong force of the will, which should govern every passion, be unnerved and paralyzed, and how is the soul a wreck and a chaos? Quite as disastrous is the want of a governing force, when many ignorant, weak-willed, undisciplined children and youth are brought together, and expected to act in harmony. There must therefore be government efficient and thorough, such as shall bring all the minds, so far as the purposes of the school are concerned, under the efficient control of the teacher's will.

It will be proper, however, to remember that this necessary govern-

ment or control is not simply for the good of the teacher and of the school committee, or of the neighborhood. It is to help to form the scholar's character, and it is to be established and used as the letters of the alphabet are used, to teach something higher than themselves, or as we use the blackboard or slate, which are only tools or implements to assist in some noble work. All government is therefore for the pupil's good, and it must not directly seek any other end. It is not a mere convenience, but a necessity ; and its method must be such as at last to induce *self-government*—the only kind of government whose presence we can always feel, which is always profitable, against which we find no disposition to rebel or complain, whose enforcing power is always at hand, and whose mandates can at all times be obeyed. To induce the pupils thus to govern themselves is often a difficult task, and therefore every exercise must be made to have a bearing upon it ; the recitations, the recesses, the movements to and from the seats, the advice, the instruction, and even the penalties for broken rules, must all be made to strengthen the power of self-government in the heart of every pupil, and to do it so as to prepare each one to govern himself everywhere as well as in school.

Government and education both imply discipline. By this is meant a prepared state, both of body and mind, making them willing and prompt to submit at all times to the dictation of the will. It is discipline which makes the soldier stand firm as a pillar in the serried ranks, even while balls and shells are falling in an iron hail around him. This prepares masses of men to move like an automaton of steel, and to hurl themselves like an avalanche upon any point of opposition. And mental discipline enables a man, with suddenness and certainty, to concentrate his mind on any train of thought or pursuit of business, and carry his plan forward to a successful issue. Discipline is of first importance in the formation of habit—that second nature which sometimes completely overmasters our original constitution. Habits are easily and unconsciously formed, but when fully formed they are almost certainly our rulers. The formation of his habits will decide the course and fix the destiny of the man. If, therefore, proper and correct habits are formed in early life by the aid of the teacher, the child is then put upon a road where his impulses in the right direction are increased, and where his temptations to swerve from that path are largely diminished. To produce these right habits quickest, we must insist on accuracy in the most insignificant acts. Let a child know how to do or to say one thing well, and he has formed a habit and acquired a knowledge that will be profitable to him in performing

every kindred thing. The right formation of habits will also assist in checking every improper motive and tendency, and in inducing action from the love of duty, or from the regular unconscious action of goodness in the soul.

I have thus hinted at the importance of government in the school-room, and its mighty influence in forming the habits of the scholar, and of course in forming the man to whom the scholar in all cases is father. Much more might be said here, and perhaps said to profit ; for there is a common impression abroad among our people that while our school instruction is vastly better than formerly, while our school houses have been greatly improved, while our taxation for education has so rapidly multiplied, and our scholars are so much more fluent in all book knowledge ; they are nevertheless, not so well governed, and that our schools are much more scenes of confusion, and do not make the children of the present generation so respectful, so polite, and so honest and moral as did those which our fathers attended. It is much to be regretted that such an impression prevails, for it is believed not to be true. We must remember that now it is rare to find a school broken up by the disorderly conduct of the scholars, while years ago this breaking up of schools was common in almost every town. Now more than two-thirds of all our teachers—counting summer and winter, and more than half in winter—are young women. And it is susceptible of demonstration that there is actually less quarreling, less profanity, less vulgarity, less of reckless damage to the school house and its furniture, less of whispering and confusion, less of disorder and rebellion, as well as more kindness, and good feeling among the scholars, and between them and their teachers, and the neighborhood, than twenty years ago. And yet, with all this seen on the surface, our people do talk, and many do undoubtedly think that the government maintained in our schools is actually deteriorating. How can we account for this state of opinion ? Partly by recollecting that there is much less of corporal punishment and physical force used in schools than formerly, and that men have not yet learned to distinguish between mere noise, and effect, or be satisfied that a given thing can often be much better accomplished with quietness than with bluster ; and partly by reminding ourselves that this feeling indicates a need of still greater improvement, both in the amount and quality of our school government. When men are completely sunk in degradation, they are apt to be content with their lot. But raise them a few degrees, and they immediately grow dissatisfied with their state, and are wretched indeed if they are not daily rising higher. So it probably is now with our people in regard to school govern-

ment. The progress already made has caused us to feel dissatisfied with what we now possess, and to struggle for something better. This is a good omen, and it is to be hoped that we shall never be entirely contented, till our schools are so well governed that they accomplish the grand purpose—as before said—of all profitable government, and enable the scholars to govern themselves—not so much when in the presence of those whom they honor, and whose virtues are a restraint upon their childish passions, but when they are in company of only youth, or alone, where commonly the strongest temptations come upon all men—as they came to Jesus in the solitude of the wilderness.

### GOOD BEHAVIOR AND MANNERS.

While we are improving in this respect, and yet complaining about our shortcomings, we should not forget one other matter about which all are equally fond of drawing comparisons unfavorable to the present—the subject of School Behavior and Manners. Here there is no end to the fault-finding of many, and yet there has been indeed a very gratifying improvement in our schools on this point within a few years; but still it is believed that sufficient attention is not yet paid to it. If what has been said be true, that all education is performed on the soul, it becomes important that we should make that soul perfect in all its faculties, and render every faculty perfect in performing all that it ought to undertake. The soul should therefore be so instructed that it is capable of performing every office required among mankind. But of all the offices and duties in life, none are so common, or of so much real value in promoting our own or others' happiness, as those that grow out of our daily intercourse with our fellow men. We meet them at every turn of the street—in all places of business, in the family, in the church, in the rail car, the steamboat and the stage-coach. Whether our meetings thus shall be pleasant or annoying, improving or debasing, depends chiefly on our manner when we meet. If we meet cold and damp as icicles, or rough and morose as bears, the hearts beneath our breasts will repel one another, and we shall go away to hate or dislike mankind. If, on the contrary, we have learned the lessons of good manners or politeness, and practice these from real kindness of heart, the most perplexing details of competing business can be arranged so as to leave no bitterness within the soul. How pleasing, every where, is the man who has learned the high dignity of the gospel rule of true



politeness, and who pays a marked respect to others, without fawning or flattering! Respect for age, and helplessness, for women and children, for the poor and the unfortunate, how admirable are they wherever seen! And what a genial atmosphere do they diffuse around them in all places where they move! Gentle words, pleasing tones, loving sympathies, generous emotions, benevolent deeds—all in appropriate season—how do they fill the world with a sweeter comfort than Eden could know without them! These are the staple of which most of the peace of neighborhoods is manufactured. They are the root from which spring much of the improvement of society and the race. And if men are to practice these things—as every consideration demands that they should, though too many leave this practice to their neighbors—they must learn them while young; and as school occupies so large a place in the education of every youth, they must learn something of these things there. If the maxim that children should learn, at school, what they are to practice throughout their whole after lives applies with more force to one branch of education than to another, this is the one to which it is more especially to be applied. For what is of so much consequence to a child to learn to do well, as that which the exigencies of each hour are to devolve upon him? He must meet his equals, his superiors in cultivation, and his inferiors in learning—though they are in one sense still equals—each day he lives; and as his ability to treat them politely and kindly, so will be his influence among them. If he is rude and uncouth, selfish and uncharitable, he must make uncomfortable all whom he meets. On the other hand, if he is loving, amiable, benevolent, warm-hearted, genial, and prefers others to himself, every one around him will find an increase of pleasure, even from his silent presence. This good art is to be learned in schools, in part; for the schools cannot teach it to any sort of advantage, unless it be also taught and practiced at home. But they can do much towards making all children love politeness, rendering them less rude, and boisterous in sport, more helpful to those of tender years, more manly and womanly in their bearing toward each other, and more good natured and social in all their intercourse among their fellows. It is, therefore, a branch that ought not to be neglected, requiring attention daily, in the school room where children associate with their teacher, and in the play-ground removed from his eye. The pleasing morning salutation, or the evening valediction; the gentle request for assistance, and the grateful word for a favor done; the ready and unobtrusive offer of aid and the thankful acceptance; the well-timed compliment coming from the heart; and considerate and decor-

ous bearing at all times ; these on the teacher's part, and inwoven into the daily conduct of the children, are the means of accomplishing one of the most profitable effects of our common school education. Never may they be less thought of, and less practiced !

### MORAL EDUCATION.

Besides this, the noble desire before alluded to, for completeness, accuracy, correctness, exact justice, or by whatever other name you may call it, lies at the foundation of all profitable moral culture or education—that most neglected of all school duties—and at the same time that most necessary and promising of all the branches of school and home discipline. Our schools must do more in this direction, if we mean to have them continue to be fountains of sweet waters and benign influences. There can be no excuse for even a temporary neglect of the moral sense—that faculty so early developed, and so mighty to elevate the man in all knowledge and activity. A sound understanding is a thing of worth and power. A ready memory is almost invaluable. An acute faculty for analysis is highly important in all matters pertaining to human inquiry. A quick and just perception of relations is necessary to one who would draw correct conclusions. But the crowning attribute of man is that Practical Reason—or Conscience—by which he knows that there is something Right, and feels constantly impelled to desire its attainment. This power which impels us to the right, is above the faculty to know ; for unless a man knows aright, his acquirements do but become a burden, while they lead him in the wrong direction. This is above all the faculties, for it claims to harmonize all ; and it alone can make the attainments of all the others profitable and pleasurable, either to the individual himself, or the community in which he is to reside. We must, therefore, give instruction in this department of the mind, and develop this its noblest faculty. But if we are asked how, we reply, not so much by theoretical dogmas given out to be learned, and recited, either alone or in concert, as by influencing the child to act correctly. If we can only induce youth cheerfully to act aright, habit will soon make that right course necessary to enjoyment ; and when a given course of conduct becomes highly pleasurable and necessary to our comfort, it is difficult to break away from it—even when it is known to be wrong. How much more difficult, therefore, will it be to forsake the pleasurable task, when seeming necessity and duty

both enjoin it upon us? Yet this training is what is now most needed among us. We have enough citizens who know sufficient—perhaps they do not know it with sufficient thoroughness—to accomplish the renovation of society; and who nevertheless perform scarcely any service whatever. Two defects—or rather two branches of the same defect—are apparent in all their early discipline—they did not learn with sufficient correctness, and they laid no stress upon the necessity for undertaking the best things and performing them in the best manner.

There is such a thing—and that is the great desideratum in our practical education—as making every school study, recitation and exercise, promote, in the minds and lives of the pupils, the love for and the practice of truth, sincerity and uprightness. And there is the exact reverse of this, where every thing attempted is made to degrade the soul, and weaken the sense of right and justice so necessary to make a true man. An exercise on the sounds of the letters, on Geography, on Arithmetic, on Reading, or on any other branch, may be so taught that it shall elevate the scholar's ideas of the dignity of truth, integrity and honor; and it may be so done as to belittle the heart and mind, to confuse the intellect, and darken the conscience. The teacher may undertake to prevent whispering or communicating among the scholars in his school room; he may seek to eradicate equivocation and falsehood—deception and vulgarity; and may do his work so as apparently to accomplish his purpose; and yet his method and manner may be such as shall defeat his end and strengthen the evil principle that leads to these vices.

The object of moral education or instruction is clearly known; the manner of its attainment is by no means so well known. Most people seem to think that dry precepts and maxims of virtue and morality; or professions of experience, and conformity of outward life to a particular standard—or in other words, that precept and example—are enough to produce the desired end. They are content, after living correctly themselves and talking correctly, to do no more, and will then say, "if mankind are not good, they ought to be." So, many teachers, if they talk well in giving moral advice, and always set before their scholars a correct example, imagine they have done all that they can, and that therefore if their scholars still continue to do wrong, or to live incorrectly, they, at least, have abundant reason to find fault. They conclude that these dry sayings and passionless performances of duty, must surely make good scholars, or at least they ought to. And if they do not, the sin of the short-coming must belong to the pupil.

But this is not by any means always the case. The scholar may not learn a thing often set forth and enforced by the teacher, and yet not be at all blamable, or at most, not very deeply a sinner. The method of teaching may have been so erroneous, and so misleading, that the trusted teacher may be the whole cause of error to the relying child. Why should men seek to make every thing attractive but that which is of all things most lovely—their own virtue and the general example and practice of goodness? We find it necessary to make our public hotels, our places of business, our churches, ships, furniture, our persons and their clothing, beautiful and pleasing to other eyes. But when we wish to recommend that which alone makes all these possessions valuable and desirable—the virtue and truth without which life would be worse than a waste—we forget that there is any need of adding to it grace, or of recommending it by kindness and affection. Hence we repel, where we ought to attract, and debase, where we ought to refine.

We should do well to remember, that while men may be driven to do wrong—and saddest of all, in this direction they need but little urging, even against their convictions—they can never be compelled to do right. To this they must be persuaded. Love and kindness alone will bring them to love justice, truth and mercy; and much more of the fullness of love will be needed to make them perform the work of all the virtues. Whenever, therefore, the teacher gives practical instruction in this great branch of school education—the knowledge and practice of virtue—he must do it so as to accomplish his purpose; for no teaching is properly done till it is successful. We teach that we may produce a given result; and before the teaching is done, a tendency towards the desired result must be seen, or at least foreshadowed. In Moral instruction, therefore, we are not to content ourselves with telling what ought to be—we must bring to light that which every one ought to be possess; beautiful character, or, at the very least, we must put the child upon the road that leads him directly to what he should be, and implant in him a principle which shall always draw him onward in that pathway. This must in some way be a power, principle or motive, induced or implanted by Divine Grace, within his own soul. The magnet is drawn towards the pole because it has a principle within itself—not painted nor varnished on, nor yet patched or bound on—which makes it impossible to move in any other direction than that in which its own nature draws it. So the soul must have this principle of correctness, as to its moral instincts or nature, within itself—such a principle as God gives, and man is com-

manded to cultivate, which shall not only draw him directly to goodness, or make it possible to be good, but which shall make for him not to be very good, and constantly growing better. The teacher is to do all in his power, to make the scholar feel the need of cultivating this instinct of his nature which will, with a steady and stronger force, carry him forward in the performance of all

### THE METHOD OF MORAL INSTRUCTION.

What are the methods to be pursued here? Evidently, we follow the principle some time since laid down, and contrive to make virtue pleasing. We must surround the path of honor with an atmosphere of delight. Not perhaps by offering rewards to outward gence and apparent progress, but by the kindly influences of affability and helpfulness. We must enable the scholar to feel attracted, irresistibly, towards the true and noble. Let every answer in study be such as shall gradually draw the little one to feel how better is a clear, full and well understood sentence, than one incomplete and unintelligible; and how much more pleasant it is to be right and to be good, than to do and be the reverse of this, or to be without character. Let every thing be so contrived that the child will insensibly form the habit of associating all its ideas of duty and of desire with virtue, integrity and faithfulness, and that its notions of disgust and aversion shall be indissolubly conjoined with vice and the neglect of duty. It is as simple a thing to make the business of morality pleasant as it is to make the study of arithmetic pleasing, but it will demand the closest attention, with continued thought and labor. Still it is a work of love that will abundantly reward one who faithfully attends to it. A pleasing story, told or read at proper time, when there is an evident disposition, both on the part of the teacher and pupils, to fretfulness or to stupidity—told without parade of intentions to instruct or amuse—and followed by such questions as to the propriety or justice of the course pursued by the person concerning whom the anecdote is related, may implant the germ of good principles in minds which shall cherish them till they produce a rich harvest of love and virtue. But more especially will the scholar in position to perform a kind or a charitable deed be likely to accomplish the desired end. Let the scholars all engage in some service for a family, or the performance of some labor for the public good—particularly if that work or service shall occupy a portion of several

let something be devised in which they can all find employment, which shall call into exercise those very improving virtues, self-denial and self-control ; and there will not be found a little one—however thoughtless and unconsciously selfish he may have been—but will be most deeply interested and will labor most patiently and vigorously for the common purpose. By all means let there be daily tasks—set, nobody seems to know when or how, and scarcely by whom—in doing something for others, or in restraining their own passions, or in denying themselves to please their schoolmates ; and virtuous habits can no more be kept out of the soul, than the seeds of flowers can be kept from awaking out of their winter sleep in the genial soil, when April showers and sunshine beat the reveille of spring above their beds.

It is not meant that the teaching of morality and virtue shall be always before the minds of the pupils. This need not be named during the entire day ; neither need the words, truth, honesty, or falsehood, lying and mischief be once used, and yet there shall be a spirit diffusing itself through all the words of every exercise, that shall directly stimulate to their practice. Even the memory is most likely—as all persons know—to cling closest to that of which we do not say beforehand “ we will remember this.” Our whole minds are extremely impatient of management and artifice. Let us say to ourselves “ now we will be fully absorbed in this study,” “ we will be sad or joyful, melancholy or morose,” and we can hardly prevent the sense of the ludicrous from mastering us completely. Sometimes, too, when we undertake to be severely virtuous or honest, the opposite state of mind will spring upon us, and the very effort to be consciously good will really be our strongest temptation. If men find this to be the case with them after all their culture, and with all their strength of will, who shall say how irresistably the little child is tempted to the opposite course, when he is lectured and harangued in set and studied phrase about being virtuous ? The indirect method is therefore the best in the teaching of these highest lessons. Not a method which shows by its manner a fear to speak plainly, but one which seeks the great end of moral instruction by an open unconsciousness of any other purpose than rightly doing the work in hand—however little it may be. There is a manner in teaching which grows out of the inner and distinctive moral nature of the instructor, just as his walking gait grows out of the length of his limbs and the conformation of his joints ; and though this manner may be somewhat modified by long practice, yet as in walking, he walks most gracefully, who gives least attention to his pace and gait, so every teacher and parent, every guardian of youth, and every philan-

thropist will best teach the great truths, and practice of goodness and virtue, when the right spirit carries him through the routine of duty without his ever thinking of doing that duty. The sick and lame who came to Christ and stealthily touched the hem of his garment, and were instantly healed by the virtue that went out from him apparently unconscious of their presence, received the most convincing proof of his divine power. There was something in his very presence to rebuke disease, and bid it depart from those who put themselves under his protection. So it was with demoniac spirits that had taken possession of the souls of men. They felt his presence before he spoke, and fled as from a holiness and purity that had power superior to earth. So it will be with the highest style of our human teachers. In their limited sphere they will inspire moral health and truthfulness in all who come near them, and this will they do without speaking a word—almost without making a sign. The virtue filling their souls will be running over at their eyes, radiating from their lips, leaping from their fingers, and diffusing itself from their body, whether they sit or stand—whether they teach or live. They will be like bodies charged with heat, or magnetism, or electricity, and will be, whether they will it or not—but most when they only attempt the work in hand, unconscious of all else—continually imparting their own life-giving virtue to every object that comes within their sphere.

This implies a teacher of the very highest grade. Such an one it may be said as has not been—save once only—on the whole earth in all time. But that Teacher lived to be an example to us; and while we know this, we know also that it is clearly our duty to seek for the best copy of the Divine Original. Each man should first seek to copy that Life and Virtue in his own soul, and be willing to recognize and foster it also in the soul of his neighbor. And if no one can fully be such a teacher, then the one who makes the nearest approach to this character is the one whom we are to look for and place in our schools. It may, notwithstanding, be the case that though we shall certainly never find a teacher so exalted, in the person of any single man or woman, yet we may possibly find the power that can accomplish his work, residing somewhere in the whole generation of men around us. No one man can be such as was the Great Teacher, who not only “spoke as never man spake,” but as never man will speak again. But all men combined rightly may do the work of love, of instruction, of influence, of sympathy, of healing, and of soul-strengthening that Christ did. Could we all, men and women, citizens and officers, rightly understand our duty to our children—the heritage

of God on earth—and were we all willing conscientiously to perform our full share of that greatest work of a Christian commonwealth—the training of men to be living souls—did we seek the teachers having the noblest hearts and minds, and who had been best educated for their work—did we also select our wisest citizens to be the supervisors and coadjutors of those teachers—did we give to them our heartiest confidence and support, cheering them and manifesting, by our frequent presence, our warmly expressed sympathy—and making our own lives to be radiant examples of virtue, with power to refine and transmute all base metals in our own or in the souls of those who approach us into gold—we might be able to save every youth from crime and debasement, and to raise the mass of men to the greatest honor. This is what we are to seek—the elevation of every one poor, of every one unlearned, and the universal spread of hope and love, to the habitations of those whose fathers have been oppressed and degraded by vice and ignorance, and who are dwelling in the earth only to prepare for a worse destiny hereafter.

When therefore by the union of all good men in the community, we have obtained teachers who know the elements of knowledge thoroughly, who love virtue and practice it as unconsciously as they breathe, who delight in teaching truth and purity in all things, and who do their work not for reward or honor, but because they cannot let it alone; we may be sure our children cannot, if they should try—which trial under such circumstances their own natures will disallow—avoid learning rightly to know science, and obediently and cheerfully to perform duty. When our school officers—committees, visitors and examiners, in the form of that same august union—shall understand what a good school is, and what are the best means of attaining its grand purposes, and shall by frequent, unpretending calls, and by encouraging, hopeful words, seek to discharge the important functions of their office; then may we rightfully expect our common schools to rise uninterruptedly in power to renew and elevate the souls of all who attend upon them. And when the whole people—citizens as well as parents—fully comprehend the worth of excellence and the relations of universal education—correct and thorough in all its elements—to virtue, prosperity and happiness, and will remember that, though they employ and pay teachers to do much of the work of that education, or appoint supervisors to compel those instructors to perform their duties, they still are responsible for the whole that the school undertakes; then we may safely anticipate the time when children shall grow in knowledge and virtue, with every advancing year, as surely as



they grow in capacity. When the great governing force—the mass of the people—by its irresistible law public opinion—unwritten and therefore irrevocable—demands that every child shall be taught in all useful science, and in all practical virtue—taught to delight in these, as he delights in beholding clouds, and sky, and sunlight without thinking or even caring why, and taught to practice these virtues for the same reason as they eat or drink, because their natures crave them without reasoning or philosophizing ; then shall we have before us the prospect of stable society, abundant prosperity and continual progress. Let us, therefore, as members of an honored commonwealth, address ourselves anew to this our greatest work of educating those who shall come after us, in all that man should know, inuring them to all that citizens should perform, and elevating them to all the privileges that Christians should enjoy. Having thus filled our measure of duty, we may then confidently look for the blessings of Heaven upon the work of our hands, and look forward with anticipations of our State's future glory. Can we, fellow citizens, do less than has been here indicated and approve ourselves to our own consciences, to our country, and to God ?

ROBT. ALLYN,  
COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

*January 1, 1857.*

## REMARKS ON THE TABLES.

These tables have been prepared with much care, and are as correct, it is believed, as any tables can well be made, where so many persons are concerned, no one of whom is either paid for his work, or can hope for honor from labor which must so certainly be unseen, or if seen at all only half seen by any other than the officer for whom the tables are made up. It is hard to conceive the difficulties that are to be encountered, and the labors to be performed in making up a complete set of tables to accompany such a Report as this. And their value, when properly made up, can hardly be overstated.

Here can be seen, at a glance, a large array of facts, and those of the most interesting kind. Facts which will enable us to prophecy with infallible accuracy, as to the locality whence must come the crimes and the virtues of the next twenty and thirty years. By running the eye along those portentous—far more ominous they are than the serried columns of an invading army—we can say whence shall come the light of virtue, with power to deliver men from misery and want; or the larkness of vice, with destruction in its train.

These tables also afford an opportunity for each town to compare its own operations and sacrifices in the cause of its own children's education, with each other town, and it can thus be seen at a glance what value each puts upon its schools, and which are willing to be independent, and which rely on the State government to do most of the work for them.

The figures used to make the comparisons of the amount raised by the towns themselves in Table IV are taken from the Special Report on Truancy and Absence. These numbers are used partly because neither the Statistics of Winter Schools, nor those of the Summer schools are entirely full.

It will be seen by this Table that the ratio of the State Appropriation to the several towns is very dissimilar—ranging from \$1 23 to \$2 83 per scholar registered; and from \$1 86 to \$5 38 on the average attendance—while it is for each scholar registered in the whole State, \$1 84, and for each scholar in average attendance \$2 59—a large discrepancy indeed.

The ratio raised by the towns themselves is still more variable—ranging from 23 cents—almost zero—to \$6 43, for each scholar regis-

tered ; and from 36 cents to \$8 72 for each scholar in average attendance, while the average amount thus raised by the towns, is for the whole State \$4 12.

The cost of educating a child whose name gets on the Register in the several towns varies quite as much—ranging from \$2 26 to \$11 20; and the cost on the average attendance from \$3 48 to \$14 51. This difference in the cost of educating a scholar will not exactly measure neither the amount nor the quality of the instruction actually imparted. Where the sum is highest, the time during which the schools were kept open, is much longer, as well as the wages of teachers larger.

We shall do well to remember that the most creditable state of things is where the cost of a scholar registered, and the cost of one on the average attendance are most nearly equal. If they were exactly equal there could have been no absences, and the less of these the more profitable the school, and the more economical has been the use of the public money.

Many other remarks might be made, but an individual of ordinary intelligence will discover analogies and comparisons that will better suit his purposes than any that could be pointed out to him, and I forbear.

NAMES OF TOWNS.		Amount of money expended on buildings and repairing.	Amount of money received from the Public Treasury for support of Public Schools.	Amount of money raised by town taxes from town taxes raised by Public Schools.	Amount of money derived from Military and Naval taxes for support of Public Schools.	Amount of money raised by State Bill in support of Public Schools.	Amount of money remaining in town treasury from year's appropriation.	Total amount of money from sources available in support of Public Schools.	Whole amount expended on School for the year 1867, exclusive of the year 1868.	Balance in town treasury, for next year.	Amount to be raised by the town in year, 1867-7.
PROVIDENCE COUNTY.											
Providence,.....	7,800 00	10,575 37	44,000 00	1,551 65	1,551 65	385 64	7 14	56,127 02	56,127 02	60,000 00	60,000 00
North Providence,.....	10,016 56	2,248 10	4,500 00	277 00	277 00	644 56	7 14	7,417 88	7,417 88	4,500 00	4,500 00
Smithfield,.....	600 00	4,126 19	4,500 00	644 56	644 56	.....	.....	9,270 75	9,270 75	4,500 00	4,500 00
Cumberland,.....	50 00	2,360 06	2,000 00	312 00	312 00	.....	.....	4,673 06	4,492 90	179 16	2,000 00
Scituate,.....	2,142 00	1,768 88	900 00	453 25	453 25	381 23	686 96	4,190 32	3,318 33	871 99	900 00
Cranston,.....	3,410 00	1,545 62	2,500 00	273 60	273 60	725 00	267 46	5,311 68	5,086 67	225 01	3,000 00
Johnston,.....	.....	1,260 29	500 00	247 00	247 00	1,000 00	236 64	3,243 93	3,264 76	.....	500 00
Glocester,.....	.....	1,209 70	200 00	201 60	201 60	400 00	.....	2,011 30	2,079 92	.....	200 00
Foster,.....	10 00	1,217 49	113 18	47 84	47 84	346 00	275 79	2,000 30	2,003 30	.....	113 18
Burrillville,.....	.....	1,490 82	600 00	200 00	200 00	.....	200 00	2,490 80	2,290 82	200 00	600 00
Totals,.....	24,028 56	27,802 52	59,813 18	4,208 50	4,208 50	3,237 87	1,673 99	96,736 06	95,654 74	1,476 16	76,313 18
NEWPORT COUNTY.											
Newport,.....	1,504 23	2,317 53	8,500 00	501 00	501 00	650 03	.....	11,968 56	11,968 56	.....	9,000 00
Portsmouth,.....	25 00	722 44	300 00	58 00	58 00	761 51	61 31	1,903 26	1,903 26	.....	300 00
Middletown,.....	.....	384 71	200 00	25 00	25 00	354 00	9 32	973 03	973 03	.....	200 00
Tiverton,.....	3,912 47	2,005 52	1,500 00	134 00	134 00	1,519 92	157 31	5,316 75	5,316 75	.....	2,000 00
Little Compton,.....	1,200 00	747 47	250 00	20 97	20 97	281 11	12 50	1,312 05	1,312 05	.....	250 00
New Shoreham,.....	.....	564 61	100 00	150 00	150 00	337 00	1 31	1,152 92	1,138 31	14 61	100 00
Jamestown,.....	.....	145 40	25 00	19 33	19 33	207 40	.....	397 13	397 13	.....	25 00
Totals,.....	6,641 70	6,887 68	10,875 00	908 30	908 30	4,110 97	241 75	23,023 70	23,009 09	14 61	11,875 00

WASHINGTON COUNTY.										
South Kingstown,.....	664 00	1,781 95	460 00	204 00	.....	575 95	3,021 90	2,832 92	188 98	460 00
Westerly,.....	765 00	1,132 01	200 00	129 14	174 28	137 73	1,773 16	1,773 17	.....	200 00
North Kingstown,.....	.....	1,297 46	450 00	128 20	539 31	689 23	3,104 20	2,680 54	432 66	450 00
Exeter,.....	89 00	900 92	144 06	44 65	89 02	306 82	1,485 47	1,240 86	244 61	144 06
Charlestown,.....	.....	520 60	100 00	60 44	108 62	78 54	868 20	789 66	78 54	83 00
Hopkinton,.....	162 60	1,123 96	140 81	101 62	.....	.....	1,366 39	1,366 39	.....	140 81
Richmond,.....	91 12	926 08	175 00	58 46	403 48	153 95	1,716 97	1,605 70	111 27	200 00
Totals,.....	1,771 72	7,682 98	1,669 87	726 51	1,314 71	1,942 22	13,336 29	12,289 23	1,056 06	1,677 87
KENT COUNTY.										
Warwick,.....	.....	2,341 76	1,000 00	286 16	.....	388 05	4,015 97	3,651 85	364 12	1,500 00
Coventry,.....	.....	1,544 08	200 24	96 06	230 61	309 97	2,380 96	2,020 91	360 05	200 24
East Greenwich,.....	450 00	740 12	181 60	48 00	187 50	.....	1,157 22	1,157 22	.....	181 60
West Greenwich,.....	.....	793 42	100 00	105 85	.....	445 47	1,444 74	999 27	445 47	100 00
Totals,.....	450 00	5,419 38	1,481 84	536 07	418 11	1,143 49	8,998 89	7,829 25	1,169 64	1,981 24
BRISTOL COUNTY.										
Bristol,.....	155 13	1,237 10	4,000 00	85 12	1,245 43	5 29	6,572 82	6,417 81	155 01	4,000 00
Warren,.....	37 39	700 49	1,700 00	44 43	79 60	76 07	2,600 59	2,585 62	14 97	2,500 00
Barrington,.....	.....	266 23	200 00	13 00	95 01	.....	574 24	561 24	13 00	250 00
Totals,.....	192 52	2,203 82	5,900 00	142 55	1,420 04	81 36	9,747 65	9,564 67	182 98	6,750 00
RECAPITULATION BY COUNTIES.										
Providence County,.....	24,028 56	27,802 52	59,813 18	4,208 50	3,237 87	1,672 99	96,736 06	95,654 74	1,476 16	76,313 18
Newport County,.....	6,741 70	6,887 68	10,875 00	908 30	4,110 97	241 75	23,023 70	23,009 09	14 61	11,875 00
Washington County,.....	1,771 72	7,682 98	1,669 87	726 51	1,314 71	1,942 22	13,336 29	12,289 23	1,056 06	1,677 87
Kent County,.....	450 00	5,419 38	1,481 84	536 07	418 11	1,143 49	8,998 89	7,829 25	1,169 64	1,981 84
Bristol County,.....	192 52	2,203 82	5,900 00	142 55	1,420 04	81 36	9,747 65	9,564 67	182 98	6,750 00
Totals,.....	33,084 50	49,996 38	79,739 89	6,521 93	10,501 70	5,082 81	151,842 59	148,346 98	3,899 45	98,597 89

Abstract of the Returns of the Public Schools in Rhode Island, for the Year ending April 30th, 1891.

TABLE II.—SUMMER SCHOOL STATISTICS.

NAMES OF TOWNS.													
PROVIDENCE COUNTY.													
Providence,.....	23	24	58	12	113	\$84	\$33	3,312	3,291	6,603	5,661	1,276	22
North Providence,.....	10	12	22	6	22	50½	17½	1,008	820	1,828	1,137	275	12½
Smithfield,.....	35	35	42	21	26	35	18	1,221	1,198	2,419	1,741	598	14
Cumberland,.....	20	21	21	3	22	52	19½	579	545	1,124	805	400	19
Scituate,.....	19	18	18	2	16	28½	15	270	331	601	419	315	17½
Cranston,.....	11	13	16	1	20	40	18	547	510	1,057	682	397	24½
Johnston,.....	13	13	8	3	5	24	17½	132	119	251	184	142	17½
Glocester,.....	15	13	13	2	12	32½	20	177	177	354	254	161	16½
Foster,.....	19	18	14	1	13	22	14½	158	184	342	216	210	15
Burrillville,.....	16	16	14	1	13	26	21	267	236	503	363	211	15
Totals,.....	181	183	226	52	262	39½	19½	7,671	7,411	15,082	11,462	3,985	17w.4d
NEWPORT COUNTY.													
Newport,.....	5	12	17	3	21	\$56	24	447	422	869	732	391	23
Portsmouth,.....	7	7	4	3	2	31	15	96	102	198	141	107	26½
Middletown,.....	5	5	4	0	4	..	15	42	63	105	73	88	22
Tiverton,.....	18	19	21	4	19	33	22	481	477	958	601	315	15
Little Compton,.....	10	10	9	0	9	..	17	109	118	227	145	172	19
New Shoreham,.....	5	5	5	3	2	28	19	177	146	323	208	84	17
Jamestown,.....	2	2	2	1	1	20	12	26	21	47	30	40	20
Totals,.....	52	60	62	14	58	35½	22	1,378	1,349	2,727	1,930	1,197	19w.4d

WASHINGTON COUNTY.													
South Kingstown,.....	21	21	17	0	17	..	15½	227	267	494	317	260	16½
Westerly,.....	13	14	6	3	3	30	18½	106	109	215	107	93	15½
North Kingstown,.....	15	14	9	1	8	22	20	131	172	303	207	121	13½
Exeter,.....	12	12	10	1	9	20	14	142	129	271	157	151	15
Charlestown,.....	7	7	4	1	3	23	15	46	63	109	71	56	14
Hopkinton,.....	12	12	3	1	2	26	18	46	58	104	47	41	13½
Richmond,.....	13	13	7	3	4	23	18	106	167	273	187	120	17
Totals,.....	93	93	56	10	46	25	16½	904	965	1,769	1,093	842	15 wks.
KENT COUNTY.													
Warwick,.....	15	14	12	5	11	34	19	425	415	840	591	210	17½
Coventry,.....	18	17	8	1	8	26	15½	192	212	404	255	136	17
East Greenwich,.....	5	5	3	0	3	..	18	61	69	130	103	48	16
West Greenwich,.....	12	11	2	1	1	22	24	30	22	52	38	28	14
Totals,.....	50	47	25	7	23	31	17½	708	718	1,426	987	422	17 wks.
BRISTOL COUNTY.													
Bristol,.....	4	7	13	5	13	58	28	311	332	643	528	293	22½
Warren,.....	3	4	5	1	7	60	25	156	143	299	224	60	12
Barrington,.....	3	3	3	..	3	..	18	50	50	100	76	70	23½
Totals,.....	10	14	21	6	23	51½	26½	517	525	1,042	828	423	20w. 1d
RECAPITULATION BY COUNTIES.													
Providence County,.....	181	183	226	52	262	39½	19½	7,671	7,411	15,082	11,462	3,985	17½
Newport,.....	52	60	62	14	58	35½	22	1,378	1,349	2,727	1,930	1,197	19½
Washington,.....	93	93	56	20	46	25	16	804	965	1,769	1,093	842	15
Kent,.....	50	47	25	7	23	31	17½	708	718	1,426	987	422	17
Bristol,.....	10	14	21	6	23	51½	26½	517	525	1,042	828	423	20½
Totals,.....	386	397	390	89	412	34½	20½	11,078	10,968	22,046	16,300	6,869	17w. 4d





WASHINGTON COUNTY.													
South Kingtown,.....	21	21	21	15	7	29	17	482	342	824	538	341	16
Westerly, .....	13	14	14	8	6	27	20½	276	236	512	445	278	20
North Kingstown,.....	15	14	14	11	5	25	20	344	198	542	377	226	17
Exeter, .....	12	12	12	12	....	19	.....	224	147	371	266	194	16
Charlestown, .....	7	7	7	7	....	24	.....	116	85	201	139	156	22
Hopkinton, .....	12	12	13	1	1	23	30	328	278	606	396	208	16
Richmond, .....	13	13	13	9	4	23½	22	215	197	412	264	224	17
Totals, .....	93	93	94	74	23	24	22	1,985	1,483	3,468	2,425	1,627	19w.2d
KENT COUNTY.													
Warwick, .....	15	14	14	9	12	23	17½	606	520	1,126	761	316	22½
Coventry, .....	18	17	13	11	2	25	17	274	192	466	319	201	15½
East Greenwich, .....	5	5	7	4	3	31	19	117	81	198	131	96	13½
West Greenwich, .....	12	11	12	10	2	21	18	192	125	317	202	207	20
Totals, .....	50	47	46	34	19	25	17½	1,189	918	2,107	1,413	820	18w.
BRISTOL COUNTY.													
Bristol, .....	4	13	13	5	14	53	28	388	320	706	593	260	20
Warren, .....	3	4	4	3	5	51	26	198	156	354	202	94	23½
Barrington, .....	3	3	3	....	3	20	20	72	33	105	83	39	13
Totals, .....	10	14	20	8	22	44	25	658	509	1,167	878	373	19w.4d
RECAPITULATION BY COUNTIES.													
Providence County, .....	181	186	226	111	210	40½	20	8,434	7,521	15,945	12,146	3,966	18
Newport County, .....	52	60	71	43	36	34	21½	1,773	1,483	3,206	2,419	1,196	17
Washington County, .....	93	93	94	74	23	24	22	1,985	1,483	3,468	2,425	1,627	19½
Kent County, .....	50	47	46	34	19	25	17½	1,189	918	2,107	1,413	820	18
Bristol, .....	10	14	20	8	22	44	25	658	509	1,167	878	393	19
Totals, .....	386	400	457	270	310	33½	21½	14,029	11,864	25,893	19,281	8,002	17w.3d

*Abstract of the Returns of the Public Schools in Rhode Island, for the Year ending April 30, 1856.*

TABLE IV.

TOWNS.	Number of children between the ages of six and fifteen years	Whole number of children "due to the public schools"	Whole number of children regis- tered as attending the public schools.	Amount paid by the State to each school at registered.	Amount raised by each town for each scholar registered.	Cost of instructing each scholar regis- tered.	Average attendance of scholars at the public schools.	Amount paid by the State per scholar on average attendance.	Amount raised by towns for each scholar on average attendance.	Cost of instructing each scholar on av- erage attendance.	Number of children between the ages of six and fifteen years entirely absent from all schools.	Apportionment of the \$36,000, accord- ing to the popula- tion under 15, 1856-7	Apportionment of the \$16,000, accord- ing to the number of districts in the town, for 1856-7.
Providence,.....	8,196	9,496	6,839	1 55	6 43	8 21	5,048	2 09	8 72	11 12	2,984	9,716 05	905 51
North Providence,.....	2,178	2,432	1,833	1 23	2 47	4 23	1,207	1 86	3 73	6 40	353	1,857 50	393 70
Smithfield,.....	2,347	2,726	2,264	1 82	1 99	4 09	1,668	2 49	2 70	5 56	455	2,759 19	1,377 95
Cumberland,.....	1,263	1,548	1,205	1 96	1 66	3 73	917	2 57	2 18	4 79	235	1,578 87	787 40
Scituate,.....	870	1,048	869	2 04	1 04	3 82	575	3 08	1 57	5 77	127	1,026 74	748 03
Cranston,.....	1,124	1,336	1,125	1 37	2 13	4 52	759	2 03	3 20	6 70	158	1,115 96	433 07
Johnston,.....	678	788	655	1 92	76	4 98	442	2 85	1 13	7 39	68	752 51	511 81
Gloicester,.....	461	549	463	2 83	43	4 34	325	3 72	62	6 19	74	623 80	590 55
Foster,.....	408	505	478	2 55	24	4 19	306	3 98	37	6 55	18	475 35	708 66
Burrillville,.....	740	850	712	2 09	84	3 22	446	3 34	1 35	5 14	94	865 86	629 62
Newport,.....	1,870	2,001	1,069	2 17	7 91	11 20	825	2 81	10 30	14 51	653	2,122 23	196 85
Portsmouth,.....	379	430	330	2 19	91	5 77	227	3 18	1 32	8 38	70	449 02	275 59
Middletown,.....	141	180	137	2 80	146	7 10	80	4 81	2 50	12 16	12	189 41	196 85
Tiverton,.....	1,029	1,242	1,033	1 95	1 45	5 15	703	2 85	2 18	7 55	142	1,302 44	708 66
Little Compton,.....	281	325	294	2 58	85	4 46	198	3 22	1 26	6 63	11	356 87	393 70
New Shoreham,.....	340	395	337	1 67	30	3 38	202	2 79	49	5 63	28	369 31	196 85
Jaimestown,.....	49	59	42	3 46	59	9 45	27	5 38	92	14 75	11	67 28	78 74
South Kingstown,.....	838	1,020	868	2 05	53	5 81	613	2 91	75	4 62	84	961 69	826 77
Westerly,.....	577	681	581	1 95	34	3 05	446	2 54	45	3 97	97	663 29	511 81
North Kingstown,.....	667	771	545	2 38	83	4 92	486	2 58	93	5 51	78	711 56	551 18
Pawtucket,.....	319	410	364	2 45	39	3 41	260	3 46	52	4 62	43	432 20	472 44

Charlestown, .....	208	260	225	2 32	44	3 06	158	3 29	63	4 61	24	247	18	275	59
Hopkinton, .....	620	739	605	1 86	23	2 26	393	2 86	36	3 48	124	655	24	472	44
Richmond, .....	416	506	434	2 11	40	3 70	254	3 64	64	6 32	50	418	30	511	81
Warwick, .....	1,439	1,576	1,288	1 82	78	2 84	900	2 50	1 11	4 06	201	1,755	86	590	55
Coventry, .....	815	952	677	2 28	29	2 98	451	3 42	44	4 49	244	841	08	629	92
East Greenwich, .....	455	544	357	2 07	51	3 24	240	3 08	76	4 41	142	544	82	196	85
West Greenwich, .....	236	314	287	2 76	34	3 48	183	4 33	55	5 45	28	344	70	433	07
Bristol, .....	1,280	1,553	749	1 65	5 34	8 57	607	2 04	6 59	10 56	206	1,080	86	157	48
Warren, .....	400	527	370	1 89	5 86	6 99	290	2 41	5 86	8 90	43	583	31	118	11
Barrington, .....	125	139	109	2 44	1 83	6 68	84	3 17	2 38	6 68	12	148	45	118	11
Totals, .....	30,749	35,902	27,130	1 84	2 94	5 47	19,330	2 59	4 12	7 67	6,863	34,996	93	14,999	97
RECAPITULATION BY COUNTIES.															
Providence County, .....	18,265	21,278	16,429	1 69	3 64	5 82	11,703	2 38	5 11	8 17	4,566	20,771	83	7,086	30
Newport County, .....	4,089	4,632	3,242	2 12	3 32	7 10	2,262	3 04	4 82	10 17	921	4,856	56	2,047	24
Washington County, .....	3,645	4,387	3,622	2 12	46	3 38	2,610	2 94	64	4 71	500	4,089	46	3,522	04
Kent County, .....	2,045	3,386	2,609	2 08	57	3 00	1,774	3 05	83	4 41	615	3,466	46	1,850	39
Bristol County, .....	1,805	2,219	1,228	1 79	4 80	9 95	981	2 25	6 00	9 65	261	1,812	62	393	70
Totals, .....	30,749	35,902	27,130	1 84	2 94	5 47	19,330	2 59	4 12	7 69	6,863	34,996	93	14,999	97

**TABLE V.—ABSTRACT OF MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES.**

FINANCIAL REPORT OF THE STATE NORMAL SCHOOL.	
Paid for salaries of Principal and Assistant,.....	\$3.025 00
“ “ Rent of rooms,.....	750 00
“ “ Books,.....	55 00
“ “ Advertising,.....	42 13
“ “ Sundries, repairs, &c.,.....	63 41
Total,.....	\$3.935 54
Of this sum \$80 50, paid out before the appointment of the State Auditor, was omitted in the sum on page 5 of the foregoing report. There has also been received and paid into the General Treasury, the sum of \$25 00 for the tuition of persons who have not taught school in the State.	
BENEFICIARIES AT THE AMERICAN ASYLUM, HARTFORD, CT.	
William F. Slocum, of Cumberland,	Levi A. Lester, of Providence,
Mary E. Wilber, of Little Compton,	Ann Ryan, of Coventry,
Patience E. Slocum, of Cumberland,	George W. Wade, of Gloucester.
Paid expenses to October 1, 1856,.....	\$450 00
BENEFICIARY WITH DR. BROWNE, OF BARRE, MASS.	
James M. Brooks, of Newport.	
Paid expenses to April 1, 1856,.....	\$100 00
BENEFICIARIES OF THE STATE AT THE MASSACHUSETTS HOSPITAL AND PERKINS INSTITUTION FOR THE BLIND.	
Lucy H. Ross, of North Providence,	Henry S. Fields, of Providence,
Charles Coddington, of Newport,	Margaret McDonald, of Providence.
Julia Boylan, of Providence,	
Paid expenses to December, 1856,.....	\$733 34
BENEFICIARY AT THE MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL FOR THE IDIOTIC.	
Sarah E. Waterman, of Johnston. No bill yet received.	
BENEFICIARY AT THE NEW YORK SCHOOL FOR THE IDIOTIC.	
Wilfred P. Whipple, of Providence. No bill yet received.	
Total State beneficiaries,.....	14

All of which is obediently submitted.

ROBT ALLYN,

*Commissioner of Public Schools.*

JANUARY 1, 1857.



# REPORT OF THE PRINCIPAL OF THE STATE NORMAL SCHOOL.

---

TO REV. ROBERT ALLYN, COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS :

In presenting this, my first written report as Principal of the Rhode Island State Normal School, I shall endeavor to give a brief sketch of the movements which led to its establishment, and of its progress to the present time.

## NORMAL SCHOOLS IN OTHER STATES.

The first Normal Schools in America were established in Massachusetts, in the year 1839, partly by private liberality, and partly by act of the State Legislature. They were regarded as an experiment, and many prominent educators looked on with doubt and distrust, while not a few warmly opposed them. At the end of the three years for which the first appropriation was made, the State not without strenuous opposition, assumed the whole expense of their management for another term of three years. The result was such as to remove all doubts of their utility ; they have since been regarded as an indispensable part of the educational system of the State.

Normal Schools have since been established by the States of New York, Connecticut, Michigan, Rhode Island and New Jersey, while in many of the large cities of the Union, as Boston, New York, Philadelphia, St. Louis, &c., they are supported as indispensable agents for securing competent teachers in the City Schools. Besides these public institutions, private Normal Schools have been opened with more or less success in nearly every northern State. The result has everywhere been the same. I am not aware of a single instance in which a Public Normal School, whether established by city or State, has been discontinued, or has failed to command popular favor.

## FIRST MOVEMENT IN RHODE ISLAND.— EFFORTS OF HON. HENRY BARNARD.

In our own State, the subject of Normal Schools was early agitated by Hon. Henry Barnard, Commissioner of Public Schools. He prepared a bill in 1844,



# REPORT OF THE PRINCIPAL OF THE STATE NORMAL SCHOOL.

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for an Act to amend and consolidate the various Acts relating to Public Schools, in which it was made a part of the duty of the Commissioner of Public Schools "to establish one thoroughly organized Normal School in the State, where teachers and such as propose to teach, may become acquainted with the most approved and successful methods of arranging the studies and conducting the discipline and instruction of Public Schools." In his remarks before the two Houses of Assembly, explanatory of the provisions of this bill, he says of Normal Schools :

"The experience of other States and countries has shown conclusively that these institutions are among the most efficient and certain means of elevating the attainments, character and practical knowledge of teachers, and of improving rapidly the quality, and increasing the amount of education given in public schools, while it is applying to the preparation of teachers the same course which is adopted in every other profession or art."

This bill passed the House at the June session, 1844, and was by the Senate ordered to be printed with Mr. Barnard's remarks, and circulated among the School Committees of the several towns. Its consideration was resumed in June, 1845, and after a careful revision, in which no change was made in the part relating to a Normal School; it was passed by a large majority. As no appropriation was made to carry this provision into effect, the Commissioner did not attempt to establish the school, but he referred to it again in his Annual Report, made November 1, 1845. He there mentions as one of the "Defects in the laws relating to Public Schools as they were; the want of any adequate provision for the training of young men and women for the delicate and arduous labors and responsibilities of teachers," and speaks of the provision of the new law, as "an advance in the right direction," to be made as early as the co-operation of friends of education, or of the Legislature will admit.

In another part of the same report, he says :

"Although much can be done towards improving the existing qualifications of teachers, and elevating their social and pecuniary position, by converting one or more district schools in each town or county, into a model school, to which the young and inexperienced teacher may resort for demonstrations of the best methods; or by sending good teachers on missions of education, throughout the schools of a county; or by associations of teachers for mutual improvement,—still these agencies can not so rapidly supply in any system of public education, the place of one thoroughly organized Normal School, or an institution for the special training of teachers, modified to suit the peculiar circumstances of the State, and the present condition of the schools. With this conviction resting on my own mind, I have aimed every where so to set forth the nature, necessity, and probable results of such an institution, as to prepare the public mind for some legislative action towards the establishment of one such school, and in the absence of that, to make it an object of associated effort and liberality. I have good reason to believe that any movement on the part of the State, would be met by the prompt co-operation of not a few liberal-minded and liberal-handed friends of education, and the great enterprise of preparing Rhode Island teachers for Rhode Island schools, might soon be in successful operation."

These sentiments and views seem to have met the hearty approval of the leading friends of education in all parts of the State. The Rhode Island Institute of

Instruction warmly seconded Mr. Barnard's efforts in this direction, and the School Committees of several of the towns spoke in their annual reports of the importance of such an institution. Yet no action followed, and the thing for a time seemed to be forgotten.

NORMAL DEPARTMENT IN BROWN UNIVERSITY.—EFFORTS OF PROF. S. S. GREENE.

The plan for the re-organization of Brown University, adopted in 1850, included the establishment of a Normal Department, or Professorship of Didactics. To this professorship, Mr. S. S. Greene, the newly elected Superintendent of Public Schools for the City of Providence was appointed in 1851. He at once saw that the new department to be successful, must be thoroughly popularized. With this view he formed in addition to his regular class of college students, a Normal class of young ladies, which met in the High-School building in this city. This class became so unexpectedly large, and assumed such importance, as to convince him that provision ought to be made for a more full and complete course than his other duties and engagements would permit him to give. His views met the warm approval and cordial support of the School Committee, and of many liberal and wealthy citizens of Providence, the latter of whom by voluntary subscription placed at his disposal the means of securing suitable rooms, and defraying, for a time, the other incidental expenses of a private Normal School. He then made arrangements with Prof. Wm. Russell and myself to join him in the management of such an institution, to be continued through the winter of 1852-3, and, if success should justify it, during subsequent winters.

PRIVATE NORMAL SCHOOL.

In conformity with these arrangements, a school was opened in the city of Providence, October 24, 1852, under the direction of Professor Greene, Professor Russell and myself, assisted in part by Mr. Arthur Sumner. After a prosperous session of five months, it was discontinued till November, 1853, when it was re-opened for another term of five months, under the direction of Prof. Greene, Mr. Sumner and myself.

Its acknowledged success during both sessions, and the interest it excited in Normal Instruction, was such that the City Council of Providence, on the recommendation of the School Committee, made an appropriation in March, 1854, for the establishment of a permanent City Normal School. Of this school, I was appointed Principal, and Mr. Arthur Sumner Assistant, and arrangements were made to open it on the 29th of May following.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE STATE NORMAL SCHOOL.

At the May session of the General Assembly, Hon. E. R. Potter, Commissioner of Public Schools, called attention again to the subject, and secured the

passage of a bill making an appropriation for the support of a State Normal School. It now became a question whether both the City and the State School should go into operation, or whether the former should be abandoned in favor of the latter. The second plan was adopted, and on the 29th of May, 1854, the Rhode Island State Normal School was opened, under the direction of the teachers previously appointed to the City Normal School. It has, therefore, been in operation nearly three years, being now in its ninth term.

## RECORD OF ATTENDANCE.

During its first term, it was attended by only twenty-seven pupils; it now contains ninety-seven. The following table shows the number of scholars who entered, and the whole number who attended during each successive term:

	Entered.	Attended.
1st Term, Summer, 1854, - - - - -	27	27
2nd " Fall, 1854, - - - - -	34	52
3d " Winter, 1854-5, - - - - -	27	69
4th, " Spring and Summer, 1855, - - - - -	25	65
5th, " Fall, 1855, - - - - -	37	67
6th, " Winter, 1855-6, - - - - -	33	80
7th, " Spring and Summer, 1856, - - - - -	31	73
8th, " Fall, 1856, - - - - -	28	68
9th, " Winter, 1856-7, - - - - -	44	97

By the foregoing table, it appears that the whole number who have entered the school since its commencement, is 286, of whom 88 entered the first year, 95 the second, and 103 the third. The average attendance for the whole time is 66 4-9. Reckoning for each year separately, the average attendance was 49 1-3 for the first year, 70 2-3 for the second, and 79 1-3 for the third. These statistics show a constant increase in the number of scholars entering and in the average attendance on the school. But in addition to those who have entered for the regular course, a large number of actual teachers have visited the school to witness its exercises, some of whom have remained several days or even weeks. To these must be added those who attended the Special Session, referred to more fully in a subsequent part of this Report.

A very gratifying feature connected with our record of attendance, is the fact that the proportion of pupils from the country, portions of the State is constantly and rapidly increasing. Of the twenty-seven pupils who entered the first term, all but six were from the city of Providence; of the fifty-four who entered the ninth term, only ten came from the city. We have had pupils from nearly every town in the State, and to nearly every one, members of the school have been sent out as teachers. The success of the latter has, with scarcely an exception, been good, and the demand for teachers who have received Normal training is largely increasing.

It is impossible to state the exact number who have acted as teachers since leaving the school. 76 of the 88 who entered the first year, and 58 of the 95 who entered the second, are, however, known to have since taught, and without

doubt more full information would enable us to increase these figures. The smaller proportion of the second year, is caused by the fact that some of the pupils who then entered are still in attendance, while others have but just completed their course, and are waiting for a situation. Nearly all will be employed during the coming summer.

It is to be regretted that so few young men avail themselves of the advantages of the school. There is a real demand for their services. Any young man of good character and abilities, who will take a proper course of preparatory study, with a view to making teaching a permanent occupation, and who will be content to gain his first experience in the smaller country schools, may hope soon to find his way to a good position, where he may lead an honorable and useful life.

#### SPECIAL SESSION.

In addition to the regular sessions of the school, a special session of three weeks, for the benefit of teachers who were to labor in the district schools of the State during the summer, was held in April 1856. It was attended by nearly 150 teachers, and is believed to have been in a high degree successful. In addition to the instructions of the regular teachers of the Normal School, a valuable course of lessons in Reading and Elocution was given by Mr. Levi W. Russell of Ashburnham, Mass., and interesting and instructive lectures were given by many of our liberal hearted and generous minded friends.

The list of gentlemen who thus favored us, embraces the following names; Rev. Robert Allyn, Commissioner of Public Schools; Hon. Henry Barnard of Connecticut; Rev. B. Sears, President of Brown University; Professors Chace, Caswell, Dunn, Angell, Gammell, and Harkness; Rev. Dr. Hall, Rev. T. D. Cook, Rev. E. M. Stone, Hon. W. B. Sayles, Joseph S. Pitman, Esq., and S. A. Potter, Esq., of this city; Rev. Mr. Day of Olneyville, Rev. T. H. Vail of Westerly, Rev. John Boyden of Woonsocket, Rev. S. A. Crane, D. D. of East Greenwich, Rev. Mr. Beman of Scituate, Rev. G. A. Willard of Warwick, Herman Krusi, Esq., of Lancaster, Mass., and Lucien Burleigh of Plainfield, Ct. It is one of the most cheering indications of public sentiment in our State, that so many leading and influential citizens should render such services readily, cheerfully, and gratuitously, as a means of testifying their interest in the cause of Popular Education, their appreciation of the importance and dignity of the teacher's profession, and their conviction of the necessity of careful preparation for its duties. Where, out of Rhode Island, would so generous and hearty a support have been given to any similar movement?

At the close of the Special Session, the teachers in attendance passed a series of resolutions, acknowledging the "pleasure and profit derived from the able and interesting lectures," and presenting their "warmest thanks to the gentlemen who have so kindly assisted us in our work."

## TEACHERS OF THE SCHOOL.

Mr. Arthur Sumner held the office of Assistant Teacher till July, 1855, when he was forced by ill health to resign, to the deep regret of his pupils and the friends of the school.

On Mr. Sumner's resignation, Miss H. W. Goodwin, Miss E. T. Brown, and Miss A. F. Saunders, who had before acted as Assistant Pupils, were appointed Assistant Teachers, in which capacity they are still acting. Their faithfulness and efficiency, and their hearty co-operation with all my efforts, have contributed in no small degree to the prosperity and success of the school.

Professor S. S. Greene has had charge of the department of English Grammar and the Analysis and Structure of the English Language, since the beginning of the second term. By his rare skill as a teacher of these subjects, his large experience as an educator, and his extensive acquaintance with the character and wants of our Common Schools, he has made his instructions almost invaluable to his classes.

The department of Vocal Music was under the charge of Mr. C. M. Clarke, three terms, and has since been conducted by Mr. Robert S. Fielden,—both accomplished teachers. I am also under special obligation to Mr. Fielden, for taking charge of several classes during the spring of 1855, while Mr. Sumner was disabled by sickness; and for similar aid rendered at other times.

As at present organized, the Board of Instruction consists of

DANA P. COLBURN, Principal.

Miss H. W. GOODWIN,	} Assistants.
" E. T. BROWN,	
" A. F. SAUNDERS,	

Prof. S. S. GREENE, Teacher of English Grammar and Analysis.

ROBERT S. FIELDEN, Teacher of Vocal Music.

## OCCASIONAL AND SPECIAL LECTURES.

This record would be very imperfect did I not express my great obligations to Prof. H. Krusi, of Lancaster, Mass., and to Professors Dunn and Angell, of Brown University, for the kindly interest they have manifested in the school, and especially for the valuable lectures with which they have favored its members at different times during its regular sessions. By a special arrangement with the Principal, Prof. Dunn gave a course of ten lectures on the English Language and Literature, during the spring of 1856. They were of great value and interest, and would have been continued, had not other duties and engagements on the part of Prof. D. made it impossible. The school has also derived great profit from a course of twenty lectures on Intellectual Philosophy, given by Rev. Robert Allyn, during the winter of 1855-6.

PLAN OF THE SCHOOL AND COURSE OF STUDY.

In everything pertaining to the organization and management of the school, reference has been had to the great object for which it was established,—the training of teachers for the Common Schools of our State. To this end, all its exercises have been brought to bear on the life, duties and responsibilities of the Common School Teacher, and in every department, an effort has been made to develop those principles which must underlie every true system of moral and intellectual training.

The course of study is arranged for an attendance of three terms—one year—and includes teaching and drill exercises in Reading, Spelling, English Grammar and Analysis, Arithmetic, Geography, History, Rhetoric and English Literature, Etymology and the Derivation and Use of Words, Algebra, Geometry, and Vocal Music. General Exercises, adapted to give skill in teaching, and to excite an interest in various departments of knowledge not directly included in the above list, as Physiology, Astronomy, Natural Philosophy, the leading events and topics of the day, &c., occupy a prominent place, while lectures are given every term on the Nature, Ends, and Aims of Education, the Science and Art of Teaching, Methods of Disciplining and Managing Schools, the School System and School Laws of Rhode Island, and other kindred topics. Much attention is given to the means of exerting a healthful moral influence over the young, of exciting in them a just sense of their own responsibility, and a love for the true and the right wherever found, and of instilling into their minds such principles as shall guide them safely amid all the temptations and snares of life.

In every department, the members of the school are required to give "Model Teaching Exercises," as though they were presenting the same subjects to a class of children. These exercises are always given in presence of one of the teachers of the school, and are discussed and criticized, first by the members of the class, and then by the teacher. The matter presented, and the manner of presenting it, the skill displayed in explanation and illustration, in drawing out and developing the ideas of the pupils, and in directing and controlling the class, and the value of the whole as a training process and part of a system of education—all receive attention, and are all fruitful topics of remark. Then the personal appearance and manner of the pupil teacher are carefully noted, and, as far as possible, everything which would have a good or a bad influence on a child is indicated.

Such questions as the following are frequently asked :

What general criticisms can you make on the exercise ?

What special ones ?

What can you say of the teacher's manner ?

Was he dignified and gentlemanly in his bearing and deportment towards the class ?

Was he self-possessed, or confused ?

Was his voice properly modulated ?

Was he clear and logical in his statements and questions ?

Did he develop his subject easily and naturally ?

Were his illustrations appropriate and happily chosen ?

Did he manifest any originality in his methods, or did he seem to be merely following the methods of another ?

Did he secure mental activity on the part of the class ?

Did he hold the attention of each member ?

Were there any instances of inattention or disorder ?

If so, did he notice them, and how ?

These questions elicit free remark and discussion, and give the instructors good opportunity to develop practically the principles on which true teaching is based, as well as those involved in School Government and Discipline.

#### TERMS OF ADMISSION TO THE SCHOOL.

Candidates for admission must possess the following qualifications and comply with the following conditions :

- 1st. They must possess a good moral character.
- 2d. They must hand to the Principal a certificate of good character and of fitness for the Normal School Course, from some responsible person.
- 3d. They must be, if males, at least seventeen, and if females, at least sixteen years of age.
- 4th. They must desire to fit themselves for teachers in the State, and must declare that they come to the Normal School for that purpose.
- 5th. They must be in attendance at the beginning of a term.
- 6th. They must apply with an intention of remaining in the school at least two terms.
- 7th. They must pass a satisfactory examination in the Common School studies.

Persons not intending to become teachers in the State, have been, in a few instances, admitted by payment of a tuition fee of \$5 per term. The sixth point is not insisted on, if from long experience in teaching or other similar cause, there is in the opinion of the Commissioner and the Principal, a sufficient reason for deviating from it.

#### EXAMINATIONS FOR ADMISSION.

The examinations for admission are conducted, in part by written, and in part by oral questions and exercises, though chiefly by the former. They embrace Penmanship, Spelling, Reading, Grammar, Geography, and Arithmetic, and are designed to test the familiarity of each candidate with such subjects as ought to be mastered in our Common Schools, and his aptness and readiness as a scholar, and his fitness for the Normal School course.

In the written examinations, the following directions are given to candidates :

1. Write your name and number at the top of each page, and on the next line write the subject of examination.
2. Write every exercise neatly, legibly, and grammatically.
3. Arrange the answers in separate paragraphs, giving to each paragraph the number of the question to which it refers

4. Make each answer complete. Should the question be, "In what body of water is Block Island situated?" write, "Block Island is situated in the Atlantic Ocean," instead of, "In the Atlantic Ocean."

5. If unable to answer any question, write its number, and the words, "I cannot answer it."

6. Be sure to leave the margin indicated by the ruled lines, and write only on one side of the paper.

7. As soon as any exercise is finished, hand it, *with the printed questions*, to the teacher in attendance.

8. Avoid all communication with other candidates during the examination, either by talking or otherwise. *Exercises prepared in violation of this rule, will be rejected.*

The nature of the written examinations, and the amount of preparation which they imply, may be seen by inspecting the words for spelling, and the printed questions in the following lists, which were proposed to the candidates at the beginning of the present term.

*Words for Spelling.*

Botanic.	Prudential.
Tyrannic.	Shepherd.
Ballad.	Tyranny.
Brilliant.	Villainy, or Villany.
Velocity.	Rarefy.
Separate.	Attorney.
Hideous.	Immensity.
Hyperbole.	Curiosity.
Tangible.	Exaggerate.

*Questions in Grammar.*

1. Into what four departments is English Grammar usually divided?
2. What is the use of the study of English Grammar?
3. What is the difference between an adjective and an adverb?
4. Name the degrees of comparison, and tell how they are formed.
5. Change the number of each noun in the following phrases: *the ladies' bonnets; the child's toys; the boy's book.*
6. Change the tense of each verb in the following sentences, without changing the mode: *I walk. They may go. If he could have sung. I will try. Jane did play.*
7. Mention and correct any ungrammatical expression which you have ever heard used.
8. Correct all ungrammatical expressions in the following sentence: "*He done the work, lay aside his axe, and set down to rest on the ground, while his dog laid down by his side.*"
9. Parse the following sentence in full: "*The men abandoned the project.*"
10. Analyze the following sentence: "*The rain falls on the roof.*"



*Questions in Geography.*

1. The latitude and longitude of Philadelphia are about 40 degrees North latitude and 75 degrees West longitude. What is the latitude and longitude of a ship 50 degrees farther South, and 40 degrees farther East, than Philadelphia?

2. What is the latitude of the Polar Circles?

3. Name the largest River in New England, and any two towns on its banks?

4. Bound Alabama.

5. Mention any four towns which would be passed in going from Boston to Buffalo by railroad.

6. What bodies of water are connected by the Straits of Dover? By the Straits of Gibraltar? By the Straits of Constantinople?

7. What Straits connect the Arctic and Pacific Oceans? The Red Sea and Indian Ocean?

8. Name the Ocean in which each of the following Islands is situated: St. Helena. Block Island. Sandwich Islands. Bermudas. Juan Fernandez.

9. Mention any three Volcanoes, and tell where they are situated.

10. What direction from New York is Boston? Albany? Washington? Buffalo? St. Louis?

*Questions in Mental Arithmetic.*

1. What is the sum of  $9+8+3+5+4+1+8+2+3+7+2+4+2+2+7+3+8$ ?

2. What is the sum of  $5+9+4+9+8+5+9+7+8+7+3+8+5+9+7$ ?

3. 5 times 4, plus 7, divided by 3, plus 3, multiplied by 4, minus 6, divided by 7, multiplied by 9, plus 7, plus 3, equal how many times 8?

4. Multiply 2-9 of 36 by 3-5 of 15, add 3-4 of 12, and divide by 1-12 of 108.

5. How many pounds of rice, at 6 cents per pound, can be bought for 4 2-3 pounds of raisins at 9 cents per pound?

6. By buying a lot of raisins at 7 cents per pound, and selling them at 9 cents per pound, I gained 18 cents. How much did the lot cost me?

7. 4-7 of 28 equal 2-9 of how many times 7?

8. If 1-2 of a pound of tea is worth as much as 3-4 of a yard of cloth worth 48 cents per yard, how many cents is a pound of the tea worth?

9. A farmer has 2-9 of his sheep in one pasture, 1-9 of them in another, 4-9 in another, and the rest, 16 sheep, in another. How many has he in all?

10. I sold a horse for \$100, by which I gained a sum equal to 2-3 of his cost. What was his cost?

*Questions in Written Arithmetic.*

1. Write each of the following numbers :  
Eighty-five thousand. Twelve million, twelve thousand, and twelve. Fifty-four thousandths. Six, and eighty-seven ten-thousandths. Three hundred and four thousands, and three hundred and four millionths.
2. A man bought 3 1-2 yards of cloth at \$2.46 per yard, four pairs of shoes at \$3.58 per pair, and seven hats at \$3.75 apiece. What was the amount of his purchase?
3. Find the value of  $3.4+2.3$ , and of  $3.4-2.3$ .
4. Find the product of  $3.4\times 2.3$ , and the quotient of  $3.4\div 2.3$ .
5. Find the value of  $.09+.012$ , and of  $.09-.012$ .
6. Find the product of  $.09\times .012$ , and the quotient of  $.09\div .012$ .
7. A man bought 9 1-2 acres of land at \$163.20 per acre, and sold it at \$1.02 per square rod. Did he gain or lose, and how much?
8. If 3-4 of a yard of cloth cost 5-6 of a dollar, how much will one yard cost?
9. A hall 60 feet long and 40 feet wide has around it a mop-board 9 inches high. The hall has one door 6 feet wide, and 2 doors each 3 feet wide. How many square feet are there in the surface of the mop-board?
10. A tank holding 300 gallons of water is supplied by a force pump. How many minutes will it take a man to fill it, who can pump 30 strokes per minute, supposing that for every hundred strokes 20 gallons are forced into the tank?

As soon as the written exercises are finished, the results are carefully examined, and the percentage of correct answers is marked on each paper, and recorded in a book kept for the purpose. The candidates whose percentage is satisfactory, are admitted to the school without further examination, while those whose percentage is low, are subjected to an additional oral examination. This is necessary, from the fact that very many are entirely unaccustomed to written examinations and exercises, and therefore fail to answer questions to which they would give oral answers without hesitation. In a few instances, those who have passed a very poor written examination have not only succeeded quite well in an oral one, but have been among our best and most successful scholars. They are, however, exceptions to a general rule.

Since the commencement of the school over three hundred persons have been thus subjected to examination, of whom 286 have been admitted. The average percentage of correct answers obtained in the written examination by 277 of these—the records of one term not being sufficiently full for accurate computation in the separate studies—has been as follows:

In Spelling, 66 2-3 per cent.; in Grammar, 70 3-4 per cent.; in Geography, 57 3-4 per cent.; in Mental Arithmetic, 63 1-3 per cent.; in Written Arithmetic, 62 1-2 per cent.

If such examinations made in nine successive terms furnish any reliable test of the character of the instruction given in the schools of our State, some of the fundamental branches are sadly neglected. We have had representatives from nearly every town in the State, from Public Schools of every grade, and from

Private Schools and Seminaries, yet no one out of the whole number has given 100 per cent. of correct answers in every department. Only 7 have averaged as many as 90 per cent., and only 83 have averaged 75 per cent. or over, while 55 have averaged 50 per cent. or less.

Only 16 have spelled a list, usually numbering ten, and never more than twenty words, correctly; 52 have misspelled as many as one-half the words, and 10 as many as three-fourths of them.

In reading there is as great, if not a greater deficiency. Few can read a common piece of prose so distinctly that "without a book," the hearer shall understand every word. Yet good reading and spelling lie at the very foundation of an education.

The percentage of correct answers in Geography is lower than in any other subject. Some even of those who have taken quite a full course of study, including the "Higher Branches," plead almost total ignorance of Geography, and make no attempt to answer even the commonest questions, or in the attempt, make the most absurd and ridiculous mistakes. London has been transported to the banks of the Rhine, and Paris to England. The Ganges River has been made to flow into the Mediterranean Sea, and into the Amazon, and has been found in North America. Three out of a class of thirty-one thought that Ireland was in the Arctic Ocean, two thought that it was in the Pacific Ocean, one in the Irish sea, one in the North Western part of Russia, while seven by making no attempt to answer, confessed that they did not know *where* it was. The railroad route from Boston to Buffalo has led one person through the cities of Troy, St. Louis, Baltimore, and Madrid, and strange as it may seem, one-half of the class to whom the question was referred, made no attempt to name the towns on the above route. This list might be greatly increased, but is doubtless sufficient to show that much more attention ought to be paid to the study of Geography in our Common Schools.

Even in Arithmetic, the record shows remarkable deficiencies. Without requiring explanations of processes, or noting the manner of writing out numerical operations, the record shows that more than one-third of the questions have been answered incorrectly. Five numbers similar to those in the first question of the preceding list, are usually proposed at each examination, yet not on one-half of the papers are they written with entire correctness. Many, comparatively, can solve problems correctly; very few can state accurately and clearly the principles which they involve.

Grammar shows a higher average of correct results—measuring only familiarity with definitions and forms of analysis and parsing—than any other study, yet the number of those who have succeeded in filling out their examination papers without violating some fundamental law of language, is very small.

The following table may serve as a further illustration of these points. The column marked I, shows how many of the 277 persons, of whose examination we have full records, have given correct answers to all the questions in the several departments; II shows how many have given correct answers to 3-4 or more; III shows how many have given incorrect answers to 1-2 or more, and IV shows how many have given incorrect answers to more than 3-4. The column II includes I, and III includes IV.

	I.	II.	III.	IV.
Spelling,	16	103	52	10
Mental Arithmetic,	20	110	101	24
Written Arithmetic,	16	106	89	24
Grammar,	10	134	46	8
Geography,	2	67	89	17

Without a doubt the low percentage of correct answers indicated by these statistics, may be accounted for in part, by the temporary embarrassment of the candidates, and in part, by the fact before alluded to, that very few have been accustomed to written examinations, or the preparation of written exercises. But the second reason only accounts for one deficiency by pleading another, which is not less important, and not less worthy of consideration; for even that lowest standard recognized in education, the ability to read and write, ought to include the ability to write with at least an approach to grammatical accuracy. Yet it would not be difficult to select from the examination papers we have on file, enough to fill *more than one* page with such expressions as the following:

"It" (Grammar) "teaches the pronunseation of words."

"20 degrees father East."

"I cannot analyze it futher."

"If any one doubts my word let them say so is rite."

"Grammah and Physeology."

"You had not ought to do so they should have said you ought not to do so."

"The pqsitive is the lowest degree than any to which it is compared. The Comparative is the highest or lowest to which it is compared."

"Bermudas are in Cant answer."

"The possessive case is formed by ading apostrophe and the letter S at its close of a word. While possessive singular does not."

"schoolboys is the subject are playing is the predicate the subject is limited by the a limiting adjective of the first class the predicate is modified by ball an objective element and one the common an adverbial element of the second class common is limited by the."

"The. an article frightened an adjective horses a noun ran a verb—furiously an adverb through a conjunction, fortunately adverb. they pronoun, did verb no, adjective injury noun."

"Sin first person I be. you be, he be, plural We be, he be, they be."

"Hungry Lyon's devour flesh greedily."

It should not by any means be inferred that *all* made such gross blunders as the above. Very many however do, and the few who write with entire correctness, are almost uniformly persons who have been in the habit of preparing written exercises in the various branches of school study, and who have been frequently subjected to written examinations. In some schools (for instance, the Grammar and High Schools of Providence,) scarcely a day passes in which the scholars are not required to write something or other, and not a month in which they are not subjected to one or more written examinations, conducted by the the teachers. Superintendent or the School Committee. The result in every instance has been that the standard of scholarship is elevated, and the

interest of the pupils increased. Would not a similar course in all the schools of the State produce an equally good result?

I have not dwelt on these points from any desire of exhibiting defects, or of depreciating the character of our schools. Far from it. Rhode Island can boast many good schools and many good teachers. As a whole, they will compare well with those of any other State. Certainly in no other, have I met more earnest and enthusiastic teachers, or teachers more desirous of improvement.

The deficiencies which exist here exist elsewhere. We expect fruit too soon. Parents, unwilling that *their* children shall "make haste slowly," too often demand that the teacher shall press them into the higher branches, or at least into the higher classes, and if their demands are not at once complied with, they deem it a just subject of complaint, and a good reason for a change of teachers.

Evils will never be remedied before their existence is made known. Reforms will never be made, before the necessity for them is felt. If the methods of instruction pursued in our schools are not in every respect what they should be, if too much attention is given to some things and too little, or none at all, to others, it is highly important that the attention of teachers, school-officers, and parents, should be directed to it, and that they should see and appreciate the necessity for a change. Here then is one reason for speaking so freely.

Another is, that in the Normal School, we are compelled to devote much time to mere drill exercises, and the communication of direct instruction, which ought to be given exclusively to a consideration of methods of teaching, and to special preparation for the other duties of a teacher's life. We do what we can to secure thoroughness and accuracy of scholarship, and to give our pupils a just estimate of its importance, but a course of two or three terms, is far too short to accomplish the desired work, even though our attention is confined almost exclusively to the Common School Studies.

#### SCHOOL PROPERTY.

The school property consists of the school-desks and chairs—32 of the former and 64 of the latter; 3 teachers' desks and 5 chairs, 2 movable blackboards, a good piano, 1 six-inch and 2 twelve-inch globes, a valuable collection of outline maps and charts, a set of anatomical plates, and the library of reference books, and school text-books.

The library of reference and miscellaneous books does not number over two hundred volumes, but is remarkably well selected, and adapted to the wants of the school. It includes the *Encyclopædia Americana*, the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, as far as published—11 volumes,—*Rose's Biographical Dictionary*, *Johnston's Physical Atlas*, *Black's Universal Atlas*, *Colton's Atlas of the World*, and a great variety of less extensive works of reference, embracing *Dictionaries*, *Gazeteers*, and works on *History*, *Philosophy*, *Language*, *Literature*, &c. These works are much consulted by the pupils, especially in the preparation of their lessons in *Language*, *Reading*, and *Geography*.

Nearly all the text-books used in the several classes are owned by the school, and are loaned to the scholars for a small sum per term. The money thus received, is appropriated to the purchase of new books and the re-binding and

repairing of those which have become worn. This portion of the library will be self-sustaining, and may perhaps contribute something towards increasing the library of reference and miscellaneous books. It already numbers over twelve hundred volumes, most of which are in constant use.

#### ROOMS.

The rooms now occupied by the school are without doubt, more convenient than any others which could be *rented* for our use, yet the school greatly needs additional accommodations. The main hall is capacious and pleasant, but is provided only with settees. One recitation room contains 20 double desks, and the other 12,—in all enough for only 64 scholars,—and this to accommodate a school which now numbers 97 members, and has averaged 79 for the past year.

We have no room in which one-half our scholars can sit at desks with conveniences for writing. Some must keep their books in the desks of one room, and some in those of the other, while many can only find a place for them on the shelves of closets which ought to be devoted exclusively to the library.

Another serious inconvenience is, that the rooms are so near a busy street as often to render it necessary, especially in summer, to suspend all exercises till some heavy team or noisy wagon has passed. Is it too much to hope, that either by action of the General Assembly, or by liberality of some generous minded friend of Education, an appropriate building may soon be erected for our use? With the accommodations which would thus be furnished, the usefulness and efficiency of the Normal School would be greatly increased.

DANA P. COLBURN,

PRINCIPAL.

*Providence, December 31, 1856.*

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THIRTEENTH

ANNUAL REPORT

ON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

*In Rhode Island,*

MADE TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

AT ITS

JANUARY SESSION, A. D. 1858.

PROVIDENCE:

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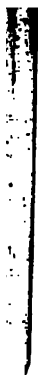
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# REPORT.

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*To His Excellency the Governor, and the }  
Honorable General Assembly.*

It becomes my duty, once more, to call the attention of the citizens of our State, to our beneficent system of public schools. For, whether the general system is right or wrong, we have already reached the point from which we cannot suddenly retire, and if we must finally abandon it, great damage must accrue to every public interest. Within the last sixteen years, our State has invested in school houses and property connected with them, not less than fifty thousand dollars annually,—a sum amounting to nearly a million of dollars,—which is, in fact, a permanent investment, and being kept in good repair, diminishes but little from year to year. The annual expenses of our schools, besides this, amount to about one hundred and seventy thousand dollars. Thus, we are actually expending on our schools, as much, or nearly as much, as for all the other expenses of our State government.

Allow me to call your particular attention to the early education of children. The general practice is, to neglect the little ones, and provide more carefully for the older and larger. Our school district trustees will very often urge the examiners to give a certificate to a teacher hired at a small salary, and therefore with very deficient qualifications, because their school is composed of small scholars! Whenever this is true, it pleads for a better teacher, and not for an inferior one. The district may not be able to pay for a long school, or for any school, without drawing largely upon the private resources of its inhabitants. But it should never make as an excuse that

because it has only small children, it can therefore be both penurious and recreant to duty. Because the children are small, and are capable of receiving, in the shortest time, the most enduring impressions, they ought to be placed under the care and guidance of one who knows the most of knowledge, and who understands the best means of communicating it and the readiest way of forming and establishing excellent human character. Large scholars, can, in some good degree, both govern and instruct themselves, especially if they have been rightly trained, early in life. But small ones can do neither. The older children in a school are not hurt and degraded by harsh and inconsiderate words and unkind treatment, neither are their morals debased by careless actions and examples, as are the tender little ones. How much of ill-temper in after life; how much of contempt for law and authority; how much of idleness and vice, not to say of crime and ruin, in the later life of mankind, may be the legitimate result of some cold neglect or bitter reproof, or hard cruelty, offered to the little innocent child, in the first days of his education, either at home or at school, no man can tell with any certainty; but it is entirely safe to infer, inasmuch as these things cannot be without influence on his sensitive nature, that the teachers and parents of one, now a morose and miserable old man, are not always free from blame. The silver coating on the iodized plate, prepared for the daguerreotype, is not more sensitive to light than the young mind is to kindness and cruelty, and it can hardly catch an impression sooner, than will such a heart take and foster to itself the impressions of the power and goodness of those who surround it. During a child's early school days, therefore, it is, that he should be specially cared for, and then the law of love and kindness should lead and sway him, just as the great law of gentle, unperceived attraction sways all the heavenly bodies. To say that "it is only a child, and therefore he needs only a poor teacher," is not only to insult a nature nearer the angelic than any other on earth, but is to disregard the great lessons of Divine goodness, and to overlook all the experience and philosophy of man himself. When the child's limbs are weak and his feet are tender, then, more than at any other time, should a gentle hand guide him along a pathway strewn with flowers. Then should he find "the ways of wisdom pleasantness, and all her paths peace." Then he should be induced to travel in that road with zeal and diligence, not driven by a whip of scorpions, but allured by every delightful will, and every eleva-

ting and ennobling aspiration. No illiterate dunce or boorish idler, too ignorant for a clerkship and too lazy to labor, should be hired to teach him, because he proposes to work at a cheap rate; to instruct him since "he is only a child." No stern man of iron, or prim woman of steel,—too unaccommodating and surly for business, and too much wanting in common sense to earn a living in an innocent way,—should be put into the school house to govern him, because he can keep order and is a good disciplinarian, and the "little one is not very forward in his studies." Surely, if the Great Redeemer of souls, who knew all things, thought it a part of his duty to rebuke this spirit in his early disciples, it cannot be amiss for his children in these later days, to study the same great lesson, and to remember how he took the infants in his arms and blessed them, declaring that of such is the kingdom of heaven, not only in innocence, but in capacity for knowledge and goodness. He, therefore, who neglects the child, because he foolishly reckons him to be ignorant, or incapable, or unworthy of the highest attention, sins against childhood, and also against the law of Christ and his own humanity.

By seeking the best teachers for our young children, great gain will accrue in more than one direction. The noblest benefit of a true education is, that the youth and men of the coming generation will be more virtuous, intelligent, refined, and worthy of their great work and destiny as human and immortal beings. Thus to fit men for the labor, the sufferings, and the duties of this life, ought to be the great business of each generation. For this, philosophy should speculate and reason; and practical duty should regard this as its greatest and noblest idea, if not as the particular sphere that includes all the ramifications of its work. Christianity may well reckon on this as the best means of bringing in that day when the desire of all nations shall be accomplished, and when the earth shall be once more the kingdom of God. Not only will the work, which truth and love sigh for, be better performed by giving attention to the early education of our children by the best qualified teachers; it will be accomplished much sooner, and therefore, on the whole, at a vast saving of expense. There cannot be a doubt on this point,—that the best instructed and most wisely experienced teachers will educate children with far fewer failures and in less time; and still smaller will be the doubt, that the children, thus educated, will be more powerful for good, and be far more energetic in philanthropic deeds, than those educated, or rather, not educated, by cheap in-



structors and incompetent men. Look at this matter of expense in its proper light. If we can teach children earlier in life, without detriment to health,—a point not hard to prove,—then the time thus saved, will be used by older, stronger, wiser, more virtuous laborers in all the departments of life, and is so much direct gain to the community. Suppose it requires a common teacher ten years, that is, the period between the ages of five and fifteen, our school age, to educate forty children. It costs four hundred dollars a year for the teacher, and, including all expenses of board, clothing, books, and the loss of what the child would have earned, say, one hundred and twenty-five dollars a year for each of these children, a large estimate probably. Allowing it to cost six thousand dollars for a school house and repairs during these ten years, and the whole expense of educating these forty children will be represented by sixty thousand dollars. Now, hire a teacher at twelve hundred dollars a year, who knows how to begin, and how to apply motives, discipline and instruction, so as to finish his work in eight years, and, as the better, will, at the same time, make the children stronger in body, more upright in character, and more energetic. Here, on the same estimate as before, is an expense of fifty-eight thousand dollars, and the children are now set free to earn, and to labor for the good of the society. Thus the better teacher, in one school, saves during eight years, two thousand dollars in money, and eighty years, two years for each child, of very valuable time. Now, how much better are these well taught scholars for clerks, for artisans, for teachers, for students in the higher branches of learning, than the others! Count, if you can, in addition to this saving of money, all the noble and desirable things above enumerated, and a thousand others that cannot be named, and you get an idea of the profit, pecuniary and otherwise, to a community that shall give its attention more carefully to the training of small children. Here is matter of thought for the political economist, as well as for the philanthropist, the educator, and the parent. School committees should not overlook it; and teachers, if they would smooth their future pathway and that of their successors, and render success far more certain and far more abundant, should attend more to the little ones “on the small seats,” even if they are compelled to seem to neglect those “at the large desks.” The statesman should examine this matter carefully. The children are the best estate of any community. A nation may abound in resources of iron, silver, copper, lead, coal, gold and prec-

ious gems, and in streams that bring perennial power to her mill wheels; she may have the finest soil and the noblest harbors, and may enjoy a climate such as the sun makes for no other land; yet, if she have not the men,—not simply so many material forms possessing bones and blood, thews and sinews,—but men, possessing free and energetic souls, fiery courage, keen intelligence, and unconquerable wills, she will be weak and uninfluential. But if she have the men, it will matter comparatively little whether she have the resources at hand or not. If her sons are hardy and daring, honest and resolute, skillful and persevering, they will find harbors, or at least, safety for her commerce in the mid-ocean even; they will bring the gold of the West, and the diamonds of the East, to build and adorn her palaces and deck her beauties; they will gather the down from the cotton field, and the fleece from the flocks of all climes, to clothe her millions; they will bring up fuel from the bottom of the mountains distant by the space of a hemisphere, and make it melt and forge the iron nourished at the antipodes; they will reap harvests to fill their granaries, which grow on virgin fields of far-off continents; and they will sell, at almost fabulous profit, her skill-woven fabrics to the people of other climes. Yet, if a people will be thus powerful and prosperous in all future time, they must not disguise the matter at all, or attempt to ignore their duty to their offspring. These must be their chief care. Not stocks, nor commerce, nor armies, nor navies, nor any pursuit of material wealth, must be its first aim; but its sons and its daughters, its jewels of brightest lustre and highest value, must first be cared for, and then all other things will grow naturally and healthfully. It will not answer to put them off with a slight care, reckoning that they are intelligent and self willing, and that, as the whole spirit of the age is aroused to grasp knowledge, diffusing as well as discovering it, they will, therefore, of necessity learn and grow to be all that the commonwealth demands them to know and to be. They must have special attention, and that must be given early, and be most assiduous.

This is a topic very fruitful of remark, and legitimately does it fall within the scope of the duties of the Commissioner of Public Schools, as they are prescribed by law, to present it, and to urge it upon the attention of towns and villages. With more diligent and careful supervision and foresight, the same or even greater benefits might be derived from the one-half of the money now expended on our schools. We must commence our efforts for this end on our primary

schools. We need reform here very sadly. It will not answer to turn off the abecedarians, as is now too often done, by being called to the teacher's desk and "*made*" to look at their letters twice in the long, long forenoon, and as many times in the afternoon. Such children must be taught; they cannot study. They can learn rapidly, but not by sitting still and gazing at stupid books. They cannot either, employ themselves with "their slates," things so convenient and useful in a school room, but which are not, as many seem to think, a complete defense against restlessness, nor an aid to knowledge that will enable the scholar to climb the hill of science alone. They must be instructed orally and pictorially, by exercises of hands, and feet, and eyes, and ears, and by the use of their faculties of comparison, or judgment, of analysis, and of combination. And the teacher must, in every thing go before them and *help* them; not do the work for them, but only assist them to find a way and the power of doing everything for themselves. They should *see* the forms of words and letters, and pictures to represent those words. They should *hear* the sounds of the words and of the letters, and they should be taught to copy those forms and pictures, and to produce those sounds. They should be chiefly amused, not *drilled*; but still, so amused, with a high purpose, that they shall find profit where they feel pleasure. And when they have mastered the alphabet, a conquest, to a child, greater than that for which Alexander sighed,—a something better than another world, since it is the key to all the knowledge of this,—they should not be put to reading meaningless extracts, which they have heard the older scholars read over till they could almost repeat them word for word. They should read much, but it should be something highly interesting and easily understood, and which they can therefore read with grace and propriety, as well as with force and perspicuity. Go into almost any of the schools of our State, and sit without a book, and listen to the reading; the higher class, often, as well as the lower. Try to understand what they are reading, and to comprehend its meaning. Possibly you can understand the half; but you must be in a school that has, for years, been under the charge of the same and a good teacher. Now converse with these same scholars when recess time comes, or hear them talk with each other. Can you understand them? Not a word is lost; not a shade of the idea is wanting. All is distinct and very forcible, and, not unfrequently, very graceful. In the reading class, they falter, they mumble, they sputter, they blunder, they stammer

and repeat, and make such absolute nonsense of beautiful extracts, that you almost weep to hear them thus horribly murdered. But in the yard or the parlor, they speak distinctly and clearly, with confidence and elegance. Is it easier to think of the idea to be conveyed, to study for the word which is to clothe it, and then to speak the sound, than it is to see the word, to think of its meaning, and to produce its sound, when it lies before the scholar in a book? And yet it would seem to be much easier to perform the former than the latter, since our pupils speak well on the play ground and read detestably in the school room. A part of the difficulty lies in the fact that a scholar, at the time when he began to read, read mostly what he did not at all understand, and was allowed to read what he did not understand, as though he did understand it. He read such sentences as, "*He has a hat*;" "*I can get his cap*;" "*See my dog*," and others, spelling each word by calling the names of the separate letters it contains, and waiting for the teacher to pronounce the word for him. While he is calling the letters of one word, he must, necessarily, forget the previous one, and as he does not make the sounds of the letters, he must be continually puzzled to know how such a sound or word can be derived from such a combination of letters. When he comes to the end of the sentence, by this spelling process, how can he have even the most distant idea of what are the single words, much less of what they mean. Take the example given;—" *He has a hat.*" Hear the little innocent child calling off, with a determination in his voice and manner that would not discredit a Napoleon, the letters of this sentence, and then imagine his thoughts as the teacher *makes* the words for him with his voice. The child says "aytch," "ee." The teacher instructs him to call it *he*. See the unsuspecting little fellow stare, as he learns that "*aytch, ee*," really sounds "*he*." What can it mean? But he has, as all children have, thanks to an All-Wise Creator, an undoubting faith, that, in the words of an almost paradoxical hymn,

"Laughs at impossibilities,  
And cries it must be done,"

and so he calls the word and goes on. "*Aytch ay ess*," and looking up for guidance, is met with the sound of "*has*." So, through each word in succession, in pronouncing which there scarcely appears a single sound that the child made in calling the names of the let-

ters; and as soon as he has "*spelt* through," in this way, he is hurried on to the next sentence, without time to think or to repeat. Every word, in this way of reading, appears to him as separate and almost as incomprehensible as the several stars that stud the canopy of night. He cannot know what he is reading about, and he must be contracting very bad habits, and preparing himself to contract a thousand others still worse. He is losing his time and preparing himself to either hate it, or to sink down, as he grows older, into the sing-song, mouthing drawl of our common schools; a tone and a manner that would disgrace a dog baying at the moon, and which is harder to break up than it would be to release him from fetters of brass.

The child does not speak without knowing what he would say, and hence, he ought not to read, without knowing what he would read, and without understanding it clearly. When he speaks, he has a purpose, and when he reads, he ought to be so prepared, by questions beforehand, that he should feel the influence and the impulse of a desire to communicate something by his reading. When he talks, he does it with a confidence that he can say anything that he tries; but, too often, when he reads, he has just as strong a confidence that he *cannot* do it; and the effect of these different species of confidence is strikingly different on his spirits. Why it should be harder to read than to speak or to talk, is a mystery. In the last report it was stated about two-fifths of all the time spent by a scholar in school, is devoted, in one way or another, to reading. This time is nearly a loss if the child does not learn to read, and it demands the most serious attention of school committees and visitors. Reading should be combined with every school exercise, and so mingled and enlivened with questions, anecdotes, narratives, compositions, tales, voyages and travels, as to awaken the keenest curiosity and the highest enthusiasm. The scholar should be so led on as hardly to know the difference between reading and talking; not the low, common, and vulgar manner of street or kitchen conversation, but talking in the higher and nobler language of books, and of the best kind of social intercourse and oratory. This is, by no means, an impossibility, but, on the contrary, is a very plain matter of fact sort of business. It only needs intelligence and patience on the part of the teacher, and a degree of wisdom in the community, that shall call for the employment of such teachers, and sustain them in their work. It might need a reform in our or-

dinary text books for reading, but it would not necessarily involve any additional outlay of expense to try the experiment.

The ability to read well, is such an elegant and useful accomplishment, to say nothing of its power to charm, so profitable to a social gathering, that we certainly can afford to take some pains, and to be at some extra expense, to secure it for our children. Far more useful and agreeable than the art of dancing, it can be had for less cost, and will not require a greater loss of time. But if a young man or woman acquires this elegant art, he must commonly get it after he leaves school. It is so at our academies and colleges. A good and a graceful elocution is rarely formed at these places. Indeed, there is an opinion prevalent that there is some antagonism between studious habits and thorough scholarship and elegant oratory. Yet the most superficial attention to this subject would convince any one that these are really auxiliaries one of the other; and that to make our scholars good readers in all our common schools, needs only more skill and more philosophical methods in teaching.

We are looking to our State Normal School for aid in this particular branch of practical knowledge; and it is proper to say here, that this school devotes much of its time to inculcating methods of elementary education. It seeks to assist in the place where assistance is most needed, and proposes to begin at the bottom, and to advance, gradually, towards the highest departments. We desire to imbue the minds of all teachers with the idea, that the noblest work of the teacher is in teaching the very young child, and in preparing the way for him, so that he shall escape a great part of the toils and difficulties that others have had to encounter in their pathway; and to make all feel that the instructor's business is chiefly in connection with imparting elementary knowledge. In our schools, every branch is now tolerably well taught, except in its elements,—the place of all others where good and thorough instructions are most needed, and to impart which easily, naturally, speedily and permanently, is most difficult, and requires the most of native genius, as well as the longest practice and the most highly cultivated powers. Anybody can teach a philosopher on a point where he has not thought or studied. He needs but the smallest hint; it may be very awkwardly communicated, and very imperfectly shadowed forth; but the mind of the philosopher, keenly sensitive as it is to a new idea, can catch it in a moment, and, being well disciplined, it can follow it without further

assistance, to all its legitimate results. But, to teach the mind that knows nothing and has dull perceptions or wandering thoughts, and to make such an ignorant child improve rapidly, first in gaining information, and secondly, in shrewdness and ability, surely requires the skill of a philosopher of the highest order. An Agassiz can learn from the poorest hint of the untutored rustic. A Newton, from the fall of an apple, could discover all that has made his name a synonym of the highest power of thought and the soundest speculation. But Laura Bridgham, blind, deaf and dumb, can only learn when taught by the best philanthropist of his age, and the most scientific teacher of his country. So of our little children; they need the best teachers; those most enlightened, most skillful and most ingenious. And that policy that seeks to put off these little ones with the youngest, most inexperienced and most careless teachers, is, as has been before observed, a policy, not only unprofitable, but damaging, and even suicidal to every interest of the community.

Leaving this topic, let us inquire by what other methods we may improve our schools. Our excellent school law provides for the annual distribution of a large amount of information upon the subject of our schools. It requires an annual report from the Commissioner of Public Schools to the General Assembly, and, through this, to the people of the State, and it provides for the distribution of a very large edition of this document. Provision is also made, from time to time, for the publication and distribution of the law itself, together with certain forms for transacting business under it, and the opinions and decisions of the Commissioner upon cases of dispute that have arisen in the execution of its provisions. In addition to this, the several school committees of the towns in the State are required, annually, to make a report to the voters of their respective towns, which they are authorized to print and to circulate among their fellow citizens. In these several ways, it is thought that a very liberal provision is made for the diffusion of information, and the formation of public sentiment, which is the only really efficient promoter of public education. Now, in every possible way it is duty to make it appear more desirable for a family to give its children an education, than to give them great riches, or honor, or social position; and we must make that education synonymous with intelligence, virtue, integrity, and honor. We must make a public opinion which shall demand for every child,—the high and the lowly

born, the rich and the poor, the country bred no less than the resident of the city,—the privileges of an education that shall render him sound and virtuous in soul, as well as truthful and obedient in habit, both of body and mind. The formation of such a public opinion is not a small task. But it must be undertaken, and there must be no rest till it is completed, if we would be a community excelling in all the noble elements of humanity. We have an army of teachers, numbering over six hundred; a corps of school committee men counting more than a hundred; and district trustees more than eight hundred, scattered in all the nooks and corners of the State. If these can be enlightened and made to act intelligently, there will be very little danger but that the work will be soon accomplished.

The next step is to provide, by legislation and taxation, the means of paying for the schools which such a public sentiment shall demand. The school house must be built and made comfortable and attractive, the teacher must be hired and paid, and the books must be furnished for the scholars, and the time given to the children to attend these schools. The perfection of the system will also require, that care shall be bestowed to make the teacher himself such as he ought to be. And while teachers are so poorly paid, and must so often change places at so much expense, and find employment for so small a portion of the year, it is highly proper and even necessary, for the State to pay a portion of the expense of their professional education. This is now done in our Normal School, which is in a very flourishing condition, and is, under the judicious care of its present accomplished principal and his assistants, doing a very good work for the schools of the State. The annual reports of the school committees of the several towns, contain many very flattering references to the success of its scholars, and pay just tributes to its influence on the general cause of education within our bounds. It is believed that the money which it now annually costs, could, in no way, be so well expended, and that no agency could effect more than it does for the good of our school system. The teachers in the school deserve great credit and are very faithful in all their duties. The liberal offer of the people of Bristol, accepted by the Legislature at its May Session, will be a yearly saving to the State of the rent of the rooms, and will, it is hoped, give it a still stronger hold on the affections and the confidence of the people.



But, lastly, we must look carefully to see that whatever money we appropriate for the support and supervision of our schools, is faithfully and judiciously expended. The amount annually paid from the General Treasury is \$50,000, which is divided into two portions; the one of \$35,000 given to the several towns according to the respective numbers of children in each, below the age of fifteen years; the other, of \$15,000, is apportioned according to the number of districts in the State; and each town is now, by law, compelled to raise, by taxation on its own inhabitants, a sum at least equal to one-half of the portion it receives from the \$35,000. The law, previous to the late revision of the statutes, required each town to raise only one-third as much as its share of the old appropriation of \$25,000. As this was a very small sum, and as nearly every town in the State had voted to raise more than any one is now required to raise, it was thought safe and just to bring the letter of the law nearly up to the current practice of the people. The State is thus doing very liberally by the several towns. It has made a very solemn promise to each town to aid it in the support of its schools, and it ought to be very jealous to see that no town abuses the money thus appropriated to it. One thing the State should do. It ought to fix a definite time for the payment of this money to the town, and should then exact, at a specified time, a thorough account of the manner in which the money has been expended.

For two years past, the State has seen fit to pay the money from the general treasury to the towns, in two installments, a very trifling sum in July, and the balance in December. While this may have been best, on account of the financial circumstances of the State—making it necessary to resort to a loan of more than the sum prescribed as the limit in the constitution, or to delay this disbursement—yet it is not good policy thus to divide and delay what the towns need, and what they are relying on. In many cases, it will cause embarrassment, and, in more cases, it creates unpleasant feelings and discussions, that are by no means profitable. No one is ready to bring up the past for the sake of finding occasion for reproach, and, therefore, what has been done may safely be passed over, by saying it appeared to be best, at the time, and probably was. But it ought not to be repeated. The towns need to know, not only what they shall eventually receive from the State, but exactly when they shall receive it. The payment of it would accom-

moderate most towns very well, if made on the first of September, to all such towns as have sent in Returns of both their Summer and Winter Schools, on or before the first of July, in each year. And, in this connection, it is proper to say, that a town ought not to be allowed a share of the public school money, that neglects to send in its returns, and report, in proper form. There is now great difficulty in getting these returns in any shape from some towns, and from others it is impossible to get them in a form at all intelligible. The Commissioner, in other years, has been put to great trouble, and not a little expense, in correcting these returns. The present year, he has been in a situation where he could make or obtain no corrections, and the tables are much briefer than ordinary, and far less accurate and instructive. All has been done that could be done, short of a tour through the towns of the State. There is no necessity, nor excuse, for school committees and superintendents, who are thus slovenly and careless, or indolent, about making returns; and the law ought at once, and effectually, to deprive of all benefit from the school fund, any town that will elect and keep in office such a lazy set of officers. Men can be found in every town, who, for the sake of their own deep interest in the public schools, will attend to these duties; and if the town will not find them, it ought to be subjected to penalty. When it receives so much, and is required to do so very little, it is a shame that it does not perform it. Remarks on this point are made in an account of the towns in another place.

Many years ago, the General Assembly passed an act, making an annual appropriation of all monies derived from the license of lotteries and auctioneers, for the use of the public schools, and for the increase of the "permanent school fund." This law has never been repealed, and there has been no change in it further, than that by the entire abolition of the lottery system, there has been a diminution of the annual income thus set apart. The permanent school fund, according to this law, should now be not less than about \$150,000, while in fact it is less than \$80,000. Whether any blame is to be attached to any man, or to any party, or to the persons administering for any one year the State government, is not known. But this is certain, that the General Assembly annually appropriates a sum for its schools, large enough to pay more than the interest on this money; so that it is proper to consider the State itself a debtor to its permanent school fund, in a sum of

nearly \$80,000. In addition to this, a sum of money, received from the United States government, under the act of Congress, usually called "The Surplus Revenue Act,"—amounting to about \$400,000—was set apart, also, for the exclusive use of the schools of the State. This last sum was to be loaned at five per cent, and has been chiefly used, it is believed, in paying current expenses of the State government. The State is, therefore, really, a debtor to its permanent school fund, to the amount of more than \$80,000, at six per cent.; and to its deposit fund—which is also set apart for schools—to the amount of about \$400,000. The interest on these would amount to almost \$30,000, which is a sacred debt due from the State itself to its schools. To these sums, the State adds enough, derived from its annual revenues, to make the sum of \$50,000, which it distributes to its schools. Without doubt, this money is expended in a way which makes it produce as much permanent benefit as any money that it disburses—and being used to educate and train the children to be better citizens, it cannot be considered otherwise than a judicious outlay. It should, however, be promptly paid at a certain time, and the towns that receive a part of it, should be held in the most rigid manner, to account for every penny of it, and to furnish specific and accurate statements of how much they accomplish with it. The State should not leave the payment of this sum, on which the towns depend so greatly, to be subject to any whim of a party, or to any temporary exigency of the times, or to any measure of fancied expediency. The only possible benefit of a school fund, is to place the annual revenue for the education of the young, out of the reach of accident, and to furnish a source of income for this purpose, that shall especially be secure in times of embarrassment. But if the State does not promptly pay the annual appropriation for its schools at the fixed time, it destroys the idea of certainty in connection with our school revenues, and does great damage to the whole system. It is, therefore, earnestly recommended, that some general law be passed, fixing a day for the payment of this money to the towns, and requiring them previously, to have made out, fully and accurately, the Returns prescribed by the Commissioner. By fixing July first, as the last day for receiving these returns from the towns, and fixing September first, for the payment of the income of the funds to the towns, there will be ample time to return, to the several school committees, any reports that are defective for correction or addi-

tion, so that a town need not be deprived of its dues, by the heedlessness of its officers. At all events, the insignificant sum now paid to many of the towns, should not again be divided into two portions, and paid at different times. This involves much extra labor on the part of the Commissioner, the Auditor, the General Treasurer, and the treasurers of the several towns, and it can afford but a very small relief to the State's finances, even in times of embarrassment. Such changes and uncertainties are always perplexing, and they necessarily tend to introduce confusion into the administration of our school system, and worse still, to diminish that respect for the old customs, which is often so salutary. We cannot expect long to see the people themselves respecting their schools, and reckoning them their most permanent and valuable possession, when they see their representatives, every year, changing the time and the amount of the payments, guaranteed to them by the constitution of the State. The people, in their sovereign capacity, in their greatest act of sovereignty, when they made the great basis of all our laws—the constitution of the State itself—have spoken, and devoted a sum, large, for the number of our citizens, to the sacred purposes of education. Let no man allow the income of that money to be diverted, or delayed from accomplishing its purpose. Every thing depends on this. To this, the honor of the State is pledged, and without this, our schools cannot thrive.

And while the State is thus honorable, it must insist that the towns shall also be honorable, and furnish such returns, reports, and statistics, as may be required. It is impossible to insist too strongly on this point. These duties, now required of towns, are very few and very easily performed. They are simply to keep a school in every district, in a well cared for school house, for at least four months, each year; to have this school taught by a thoroughly qualified and virtuous teacher, who has been previously examined; that a register of the attendance of the scholars shall be kept in a form and manner prescribed by the commissioner, in a book provided at the cost of the State; that the school shall be visited and examined, at least twice, by a competent committee; and that it shall be fairly and faithfully reported to the Commissioner of Public Schools. Now, when a town receives its portion of money from the General Treasurer, does it not virtually promise to perform all these very simple duties, and to perform them

well? Why, then, does it elect a school committee, and divide its territory into districts, giving these districts the right to elect trustees and other officers, and to levy taxes to build school houses, and collect taxes? And since all these duties of keeping schools, examining teachers, supervising schools, and making reports, are for the manifest interest of the town itself, quite as much as for the general good of the State, why will any town allow its officers to neglect, even, the least of these duties? But if the town, or any district, does neglect these duties, the State ought to know it, and to inflict such penalties as will secure the future against the repetition of the offence. The law now requires a report to be sent to this office from each town; but on this point there is much neglect—apparently unjustifiable, if not criminal. There are no penalties for the neglect of this duty, and the reports do not always arrive as they should. And sometimes, too, they are absolutely disgraceful, on account of the heedless, slovenly manner in which they are made up, and the tardiness with which they come in. But till these are attended to, we cannot know where the public money is well, and where ill expended; where is the best system of school visitation; where every thing is best carried on, and by what means; nor can we make comparisons of one town and system, with another, for the purposes of emulation and improvement. Yet, while these remarks are made upon the want of value, and of accuracy and order, in many of the reports of the school officers, it is proper to state, that there are numerous and honorable exceptions. Some of these school committees' reports are really valuable documents; and their authors, who have usually labored gratuitously, both in writing them, and in collecting their materials, deserve great commendation. They are of much worth for reference in this office, and the State ought to furnish, annually, the means of preserving them. They are, however, of most vital consequence to the people of every town, and they ought, therefore, to be largely circulated;—at least, every family in town ought to be supplied with a copy, so that the children themselves, who are scholars, can read them, as well as their older brothers and sisters, and their fathers and mothers. They will thus exert an influence that no other documents can. They concern home matters, and costing but a very insignificant sum, would, in one year, more than twenty times repay their price. But all this implies that the several school officers shall perform their duty of select-

ing and examining teachers, and visiting and supervising their schools.

It cannot be expected, that, with our system of independent districts—changing trustees, as they do, every year—that the same teachers can be long continued in the same schools. There will be dissatisfaction with their modes of government and discipline, if not with their modes of instruction. They will thus find more or less opposition, if not of hostility. This opposition will combine, and another trustee will be chosen, who will be expected to find an instructor, and thus produce a serious interruption to the studies and habits of the scholars. The new teacher does not know the committee's rules and regulations, nor how much and what support they may give him. If, now, an intelligent committee could visit the school frequently, and give advice, how much might they not assist, both in the government and instruction of the scholars? In fact, under the circumstances in which our schools now are, they need, more than all other things together, the active visitation and co-operation of the school committees. And these gentlemen ought to be in every school, at least once a month; and while the towns raise so much money, it does seem strange that they should allow it to be so carelessly expended. When they could obtain so much real additional profit, by the appointment of a superintendent, who should advise and aid every teacher, and prevent a single school from being a failure, it is very poor policy to save a few dollars by neglecting to do it. There is not a way in which more speedy improvement might be made for our schools, than by superintendents in every town. Many towns now avail themselves of the privilege given them by law, of employing such officers, who are required to visit the schools often, and whose influence is invaluable. But this topic has been dwelt upon in former reports, and it is now recommended once more to the attention of all towns, with new confidence, from the knowledge gained by observing how the system has operated in many towns. The benefit of such a superintendent can, however, be partially obtained, if the school committee shall be instructed to visit each school once a month. They can know exactly how all things are going on; they can give advice to the teachers, and counsel to the scholars; they can note what books are used, and how they are used; what are the teacher's methods and habits; what are his manners among his pupils; and what are his tones and his bearing: and their advice will have a weight, and a power for

good that cannot come from one cold and hurried visit, made at the beginning of the school, and another at the close. As it now is, the visitor comes in during the first week, or about that time. The teacher has not begun to develop his plans, nor to reveal his defects, or even to find out the wants of the scholars; and the committee cannot suggest to him anything that shall be profitable to him. And so of the uselessness of the last visit; but more emphatically is this worthless, for this is generally on the last day of school, or on a set day for examination, very near the last. This is generally a show day, and everything is done for effect; and it would certainly be very unkind, if there should not be much praise given to the praiseworthy efforts of the teacher and scholars to please their visitors. But had these visitors come once in two weeks, and been candid and thorough, how profitable would their presence have been! The cost of this would not be very great, and could not be much of a burden to any town. Suppose one of our large towns, with a number of districts from fifteen to thirty, should pay for the visitation of each school of four months, eight times, at one dollar a visit, and give the visitor twenty dollars in addition, for making up his report, and should pay fifty dollars more for printing it; would not the increased worth of the schools more than doubly repay the whole expense? Would not such a course tend to elevate the tone of the whole of the efforts of the town, to become more intelligent, and more worthy of the name of an enlightened community? And would it not raise the ambition of both teacher and children, no less than the parents and citizens in the several districts, to seek, by all honorable and lawful means, to elevate their own schools, so as to excel, or at least to equal, those of any other district or town in the State? Can it be possible, that, with the small amount of taxation now levied in most of our towns, that the people will grudge the paltry sum required for so valuable a purpose? Or are our citizens so indifferent to the waste of their public funds, and so careless about the improvement of their children, as to overlook this matter altogether?

There is another topic, on which something must be said, and which would hardly need a word, if every town employed a superintendent, or paid for the proper visitation of its schools. This is, the character of the teachers selected. The school law prescribes that they shall be found possessed of certain literary and moral qualifications, or they cannot obtain a certificate from the examiners

to entitle them to draw any portion of the public money. Now, while it is hardly possible to place too high an estimate on the literary qualifications, in the abstract, of teachers, or to require them to be too well furnished with all the results of science, and the stores of practical wisdom derived from experience, yet it is by no means impossible to regard these literary attainments too exclusively, and to neglect of those other qualifications, without which all science and knowledge will be of comparatively little worth—the moral character and the manhood of the instructor. No man can make children experts, even in the very easy and insignificant mysteries of spelling and reading, of cyphering and writing, of geography and grammar, who is not himself very far more than an expert in these useful and necessary branches—who is not so full of them that he glows with their light, and radiates a heat greater than that which can be kindled by mere intellectual truths. A man may be, in many particulars, a capital teacher, but unless he is more than a scholar, he will be a very unprofitable teacher, and he will be likely to make his pupils very bad citizens, while he makes them good scientific scholars, accurate accountants, and expert computers. There must be, in the teacher, a soul or character, which shall exert an influence in all his movements, and which shall be respected by his young charge, and reckoned of more worth than all his knowledge. He must honor virtue; not, indeed, by an outward reverence above what other men profess or exhibit, but with an unspoken, full-felt, and unconscious honor, that shall be as catching as laughter; and those who see him must be made to feel that this is not only goodness, but also *strength*. Many a good man makes us—in spite of our desires to the contrary—feel that he is weak, and, some how or other, we cannot avoid the idea that his goodness is, if not the real element of his weakness, at least the cause of his apparent weakness. This is not the kind of men we want for teachers in our schools. We want such as have all the native goodness of the true woman, without any of her proverbial weakness; men who combine the innocence of the dove with the wisdom and craft of the serpent, the strength of the lion with the gentleness of the lamb; men who are in all things upright, modest, pure in all thought, as well as in all deeds, noble in sentiment, and true in all things; and who will shrink, with as much dread, from deceiving the tender child, as from deceiving a court of justice. The great want of our age is *character*—character that the possessors of it value in themselves, and hold at a higher price than all



honors that can be heaped upon them, or than all wealth that can be piled up for them; character that shall be at once an ornament and a principle within to guide them to the performance of all honorable deeds. So long as this kind of character is rare, as is now to be feared, men will constantly be surprised by defalcations and breaches of trust, speculations and revulsions. The only time in which this sort of character can be formed, is early in life; and it must be formed by the co-operation and joint influence of our schools and firesides. And the best way to teach and inspire such a character, is to do so by example. We must go down into every school, and place there men and women, as teachers, who shall be examples of strong and inflexible virtue and integrity, and who shall thus infuse, silently but effectually, into the minds of all who are taught by them, the principles and the love for all honor and goodness. We must try to place before the eyes of our children the perfect man and make him to appear so supremely beautiful in their eyes, that they shall

“Gaze transported at the sight,”

and be transformed into his likeness. Character is often formed by two influences: the one, the silent operation of good thoughts and notions apprehended by the intellect and loved by the heart; the other, an unconscious imitation of the good examples set before the minds of children. It is very probable that this imitation, both of virtue and vice, begins its influence long before the other, and, continuing its work at all times, has a power to transform the very soul that nothing else can have. Let but a bit of iron, of the proper temper, be brought into contact with a powerful magnet, or be placed in a proper position in relation to a current of electricity, and it will itself become magnetic, to the full capacity of its nature; and if properly placed afterwards, it will never lose that magnetical character. So it is with men, but especially so with children. Let them be brought into close contact with a strong mind, and they feel its power and imbibe its peculiar characteristics; they cannot avoid imitating its habits and manners, and they must be moulded and shaped and magnetized by its influence. It is, therefore, of the highest consequence to our schools and to our system of public education, to seek such strong men and women—strong in goodness and in purity, strong in all truthful and noble qualities of manliness and womanliness—to be the teachers of our growing children. We

must insist that these teachers shall be not only educated, but that they shall be polished, refined, loving, wise, and philanthropic; that they shall have, superadded to everything that can be learned, or that is native, something even higher than that boasted common sense, without which man is always a blunderer—a nameless something, that makes men more than simply teachers, by giving to them a power to impress and elevate, by the force of a character seen and felt, but not to be described; a something that goes out of them, as heat goes out of a fire, or light out of a glowing lamp, no man knows how or why, but with a power that cannot be resisted; a something that silently steals its way into the hearts of all in its neighborhood, imperceptibly and lovingly as magnetic influences creep over the individual particles in a mass of iron filings, and, without affecting, in any way, their nature or substance, change them all, from apparently dead matter, into things with a life that longs to love, and embrace, and adore the polarizing body. These are the influences we must seek in our schools, and we must look for the teachers who can exert them. We must have men who are obeyed because they are made to be loved and obeyed, and not because they are constantly uttering commands, and threats, and enacting rules. And if they have not the diplomas of our colleges, or even the certificate of a Normal School, they must not be rejected. We must have teachers sincere, earnest, devoted to their work; not afraid of any amount of sacrifice that is demanded, nor unwilling to perform any amount of labor; not satisfied when they have gone over the simple lessons of the book, nor sparing of any exertion needed to teach the whole duty of life. By such teachers alone, instructing daily by precept, example and influence, well paid by the public funds, well supervised by intelligent committees, well appreciated by the people, and honored by the whole community, can we expect that our children will be, in truth, more than scholars and sages—men, wise, prudent, virtuous, and exalted in all that honors God, ennoble themselves, and blesses the world. We have the well laid foundation for all this. It is imperatively necessary that we give the carefullest attention to this our highest interest.

It now remains that we notice what the several towns are doing to improve their several schools. These are noticed, because the whole State ought to know what each separate municipality is doing with the funds it receives from the common treasury, and also because this course may stimulate all to emulation in the great work

of improvement, and may suggest other methods of advancing their own interests. It is but justice to say, that some of the written and printed reports differ somewhat from the returns, as made by the school committees. Which are the correct figures is impossible to tell. In some cases, these reports and returns are certainly not reliable, but the best way seems to be to give them exactly as they are, and thus call attention to their inconsistencies, and entreat school officers to give more care to this important part of their business. Each town is taken up in order, and some few extracts made from its annual report, if its committee has made one.

## PROVIDENCE COUNTY.

### CITY OF PROVIDENCE.

The superintendent's report to the school committee gives the following table, which shows the number of scholars admitted each term, during the year, the average attendance, and the percentage of absences :

	No. admitted.	Average Attendance.	Percentage of Absences.
Summer Term, ending July, 1856.....	6250	4944	7.5
Fall Term, ending November, 1857.....	6700	5312	7.2
Winter Term, ending February, 1857.....	6544	4929	11.
Spring Term, ending May, 1857.....	6845	5388	7.4
Average.....	6584	5141	8.2

From the above table it appears that the average number of pupils that have attended the public schools the past year, is about sixty-six hundred, which is less than the number that attended the previous year.

Perhaps no city in the country has a better system of schools, or has better teachers, and makes better scholars than Providence; and it is much to be regretted that the answers to the questions of the Commissioner, in the blanks sent out for the returns, are so exceedingly meagre—nothing having been given but the number of scholars and the average for the year. Certainly, the several teachers keep very much fuller record than that, as the table above given would indicate.

The report of the superintendent, Rev. D. Leach, recommends a change in the general plan of arranging the Grammar Schools, and the Intermediate Schools, so as to give to each teacher a smaller number of pupils, better classified, in order that there may be less confusion, more really systematic training and discipline, and a better adaptation of methods to each individual scholar.

#### NORTH PROVIDENCE.

The schools in this town are in excellent condition. The town has prided itself on having kept several very good and long-experienced teachers in its schools for many years, and the result of such a course is seen in the schools. What is to be much regretted, it does not now, as it has done for several years, employ a superintendent of its schools: neither was their report printed—a thing very much to be regretted, also, as the report has, for several years, been a document of much value. The committee say, in their report to the voters of the town, at the annual town meeting:

“The committee have, for the present year, been provided with no means of paying a superintendent, and consequently, the visitation has been done by assigning different schools to different members of the committee. This, to say the least, is a very imperfect and ineffective mode of performing a duty of such pre-eminent importance to the welfare and success of the schools; for if, indeed, the committee, who serve without compensation, were willing to sacrifice the requisite time and expense to the performance of those duties, still, it must be remembered, that they are not always selected for their literary competency, and that, even if they did possess the needful qualifications for examining schools, this mode of visitation would still afford no means of comparing the different schools, or of bringing them into healthful competition.”

#### SMITHFIELD.

The schools in this town are, generally, in excellent condition, and the committee ought to be better able to make up their statistics. If, as is quite probable, the trustees of the several districts are at fault, there is an easy way for the committee to compel them to be more careful and prompt in making their returns. The committee have the right—and they should never be slow in exercising it—to cut off any district from its portion of school money, for insufficient and slovenly returns. A few such refusals to grant money to careless districts, would effectually cure the evil complained of.

## CUMBERLAND.

The schools in this town are in an excellent condition, and especially in the village of Woonsocket, where is one of the best High Schools in the State. This school enjoyed, for several years, the labors of an eminent teacher, William H. Farrar, Esq., and was brought by him into a fine condition. The town has, for a number of years, had the services of Rev. John Boyden, as a superintendent, and it has not failed to profit greatly by his judicious labors. The report of this superintendent is a document worthy of all commendation. The committee recite the case of a suit brought against a teacher for administering corporal punishment, in which is quoted the interpretation given to the law, by the court of Rhode Island, upon this subject. The case is here inserted at length :

" It appears that the teacher in district No. 4 had occasion to correct a pupil—a girl of sixteen years—for refusing to take the place assigned her in the class. He believed that corporal punishment was required, and administered, accordingly, several blows on the hand. But this did not subdue her. She insisted that she was going to leave the school, and proceeded slowly to gather up her books, and, in the meantime, to utter sundry disrespectful expressions, highly irritating to the teacher, and annoying to the school. He repeatedly charged her to go quietly, if she was going, and told her he could not have such talk, and that she *must stop it*. But she did not heed him, and finally, when in the entry, on her way out, she told him he would regret what he had done. At this point, he struck her once with a stick, and there his offence ended.

" On the following Monday, a majority of the committee were notified, and came together to consider the matter. A petition, signed by a number of the inhabitants of the district, was presented, asking for a revocation of the teacher's certificate. After examining some ten or twelve witnesses, all pupils in the same school, and most of them eye witnesses of the transactions complained of, the committee were unanimously of opinion, that the cause did not warrant an interference on their part, and they dismissed the case. It was testified that the pupil in question had been frequently guilty of insolence towards the teacher, which was abundantly confirmed by her own testimony, and that, during the last difficulty in particular, she behaved with great impropriety. It was affirmed by those who asked that the teacher might be discharged, that her age and sex rendered corporal punishment very improper. The committee, however, without expressing any extended opinion upon the best mode of correction, did conclude that, if she was too old for the punishment, she was, also, too old to disobey a reasonable requirement. If her sex should defend her from corporal punishment, it should do so by relieving the teacher of all necessity for correction.

" But the case did not rest here. Resort was had to the grand jury, by whom a bill was found. The case was tried before the Supreme Court. The state's attorney, satisfied early in the proceedings, that there was no ground for conviction, proposed to submit the case to the jury without argument, which was accepted on the part of the defence. The judge charged the jury, that, as to the right of the teacher to inflict punishment, it was the same as that of the parent. If they were satisfied that he punished the pupil for the purpose of injuring or insulting her, it was their duty to convict him. But if, on the other hand, they found that he punished in order to preserve the discipline of the school, it was their duty to acquit him. He not only had the right, but it was his *duty* to classify his pupils according to their attainments, as it appeared he had done in this case, and it was *her unquestionable duty to obey*.

" But the jury did not agree. Eleven were for acquittal, and one for conviction. It was understood that the dissenting juror had commenced proceedings against a teacher for punishing his own daughter, and, of course, it would be inconsistent for him to acquit a teacher in similar circumstances. However, the case was discontinued on the part of the state, and we hope the animosities which it has excited will be allowed to subside. All thoughtful persons must realize, that the good of the community, as well as the prosperity of our schools, requires that we shall study the things which make for peace. A district quarrel is to be deprecated as worse than the pestilence. It may be long years before the children outgrow the influences to which they are subjected by the litigations of their parents; and just so long it will be before any of them can be privileged with such a school as they ought to have. The school should be as the *family*; where the interest of one is the interest of all, and where, if one member be perverse, all are made sad. And it should be remembered, that any attempt to injure another, with whom we have a common interest, must, sooner or later, recoil on the head of the mover. If a teacher has punished, as we think, too severely, let us not be hasty in resorting to extreme remedies. Inquire, first of all, what the pupil has done to demand correction, and then, even if we are persuaded that the punishment was disproportioned to the offence, it will be a question whether a resort to the courts will not nourish bad passions among pupils, quite as much as it will cure excesses among the teachers. It will be rather difficult to convince your children that you seriously disapprove *their* conduct, while you are exhausting your powers in taking vengeance on their teachers. As a committee, we offer no indorsement of corporal punishment in the school room. We know the teacher has the legal right to inflict it, being always amenable to the laws for the exercise of his powers. He must judge for himself when occasion demands it, and to what extent. *We* insist that he shall have *order*. but it is for him to seek the best methods. If he can govern without corporal punishment, he should, by no means, resort to it. He should try other means, till he is convinced they will not succeed,

and show, by his very patience and long-suffering, that necessity compels the use of the rod. Sometimes, temporary suspension is an appropriate and successful remedy, and this the rules of the committee distinctly allow, under certain circumstances. Yet, it might happen that a pupil, reluctant to attend school, and not properly controlled by his parents, would violate the rules of the school, *in order to be expelled*; so that he might have an excuse for staying away. Now, it must be confessed that there is, at least, a *seeming* discrepancy between claiming the attendance of children at school as a duty, and making a rule whereby, under certain conditions, they may be thrust out. And thus the question is environed with difficulties, which no specific regulations beforehand can obviate. The whole thing must be left to the discretion of the teacher. If home government be what it should be, he will rarely have any trouble, except by his own fault. And if parents and guardians will take special pains to deal faithfully with their wayward children, before they seek redress of the teacher, they will realize more fully his trials, and be able to exercise a little of that broad charity which covers even a 'multitude of sins.'

"We have made these statements and suggestions from a sense of duty. We all have a common interest in the institutions established for the education of the young, and should resist those measures which tend to defeat the objects of our cherished regard. The individual must sacrifice something to the general good; and forbearance, under occasional wrongs, is a truer patriotism than stringent measures to redress them."

#### SCITUATE.

There is much spirit among the people of this town, in regard to their schools, and they are gradually and steadily raising them to the first rank. The committee thus speak of one of the worst evils connected with our school system; an evil that all good citizens should labor, with all their might, to eradicate:

"The main trunk of this evil of non-attendance, sends off numerous branches, each of which is laden with its own peculiar kind of bitter fruit. One effect is, injustice done to the teacher. If the register of the school bears the names of seventy different scholars, while the school is reduced, by absence, to an average of fifty, the common inference is, that, although seventy is a greater number than one teacher can properly instruct, yet that he must be in fault, if he does not teach the fifty in a competent manner, and advance them at a rapid rate. And yet a school, averaging fifty scholars, reduced to that number from seventy, by absences, is far more difficult, both to instruct and to govern, than a school of a hundred, all of whom attend regularly. A teacher should not be blamed if he does not carry a small number of scholars rapidly forward, if the number is made small by irregularity in attendance

yet those who send their children most irregularly, are among the first to complain that they make little progress.

“Again, if parents keep a child at home, for two or three days, or for three or four half days, in a week, he must, at least, be stationary, while the class to which he belongs is advancing. Hence, on his return to the school, he is not in a suitable condition to rejoin his class. But generally, there is no other class in which he can be placed, and the formation of new classes to meet these cases would soon destroy classification altogether; because the classes would soon become as numerous as the scholars, and the school, which should march onward in regular divisions, would be reduced to a promiscuous throng of stragglers. Unless in extraordinary cases, therefore, the absent scholar must resume his place in the class; but, as the correct understanding of each successive step in his studies, depends upon his having mastered the preceding steps, he is, almost necessarily, incapacitated for intelligent study and good recitations.

“Out of this come, not merely loss of knowledge, but habits of incorrectness. The pupil, accustomed to failures and mistakes, is hardened into indifference; he loses the greatest incitement to study, the pleasure of understanding his lessons; becomes careless, mischievous, disobedient; draws down upon himself the displeasure of the teacher, perhaps punishment; has all his associations established, adverse to learning; looks for pleasure elsewhere; is disgusted with the school; and, as soon as possible, forfeits his privileges by abandonment, the victim of irregular attendance.

“Tardiness is another great hindrance to the progress of our schools.

“The quiet of the school is interrupted, the regular exercises are disturbed, the attention of the scholars is drawn from their pursuits, the teacher feels disquieted in seeing rules violated, and in thinking of the evils of bad examples, while those who are guilty of this neglect of rules, feel uncomfortable themselves. They not only suffer the disquiet that always attends the neglect of duty, but they know that they displease their teacher, and lose credit with their companions.

“Those parents who tolerate their children in these irregularities, are doing them and others an injury they can never repay. They lose the benefits to be derived from the public money appropriated to their use, and their children grow up in comparative ignorance, in the midst of the richest privileges.”

#### C R A N S T O N .

From the very spirited report of the Superintendent of this town—a town that is caring for its schools wisely, that has a good system, and spares no pains to make that system efficient, and is deriving a proportionate profit from its labors—we quote :



"The most glaring fault, in connection with the school houses throughout the town, is a want of suitable ventilation. The air in some of the rooms we have found loaded with impurity. Teachers are not sufficiently careful to keep the temperature of the room uniform, and the atmosphere pure. We are compelled to believe that this is more the fault of the *teacher* than the *school room*. In several instances, we have visited school rooms in which the air was absolutely offensive, and upon examination, found ample means for ventilation, but all closed. That stern old schoolmaster, experience, has impressed on our minds, by observation, the fact, that teachers are lamentably negligent in the matter of physical education. What sense is there in compelling thirty or forty pairs of delicate lungs to inhale and exhale, for several hours in the day, an atmosphere reeking with poison, when for the asking, without money and without price, a flood of pure, invigorating air, may be poured into the room. We have observed, in visiting several schools, that some of the pupils were allowed, in pleasant weather, to remain in at recess; and, generally, such pupils have showed, by their appearance, that they were the very ones who most needed the beneficial effects of the exercise for the taking of which the recess was given. Upon inquiring of the teacher why these pupils were permitted to remain, we have often been told that their parents did not wish them to go out at recess. We trust that parents and teachers will become sensible of the fact, that in order to attain a perfect intellectual education, there must be a corresponding complete physical training, and, also, that in exact proportion to the deviation from the laws of bodily health, will be the deterioration of intellectual capacity. In concluding our remarks upon this subject, we take pleasure in saying that a marked and decided improvement has been made in the school houses, so that, at the present time, with one exception, they are an honor to the town."

#### LACK OF CO-OPERATION BETWEEN PARENT AND TEACHER.

"This is a serious hindrance to the prosperity of very many of our schools. The district may be furnished with a fine school house, with a teacher in every way qualified for the position, but, unless they have the kindly sympathy and aid of the parents, the school is almost certain to prove a failure. It is of vital importance to the well-being of the school, that the example, opinions and expressions of the parent should harmonize and unite with the teacher's instructions. The labor of parent and teacher, for the progress of the child, should be interwoven and blended, one with the other. Parents should seek to ascertain the influence of both school and teacher upon their children. Consult with the teacher in regard to their peculiar characteristics, capacities and propensities. They ought not to compel them to listen to a nightly tirade against their instructor and school,

both of which they should be taught to love and venerate. Before finding fault with the government of the teachers, they should think if they have done all in their power to aid them, and to govern their children at home. While their children are attending school, they should see that their studies are their principal business, and be careful that they are punctual and regular in their attendance. They should visit the school often, that they may make themselves familiar with its condition, and the true state of its progress; be ever willing to devote a share of their time to the school; beware of trusting to the reports of their children, in relation to the school. Be sure to cultivate a friendly acquaintance with the person to whom they have entrusted that, which, by every principle of humanity, they ought to value more than their houses and lands, more than gold and silver,—that priceless jewel, the immortal mind of their child."

#### JOHNSTON.

This town failed to send its returns to this office. It printed a report, however, which represents its schools in very good condition. It is mainly occupied with a particular account of each district, and we do not quote.

#### GLOCESTER.

The printed report in this town is similar to that from Johnston. The schools are in very good condition. There is a very good grammar school, in a consolidated district, at Chepachet.

#### FOSTER.

The school committee of this town have printed no report, and say that they make none, for two reasons,—“1st. The freemen, at the annual town meeting, pay no attention to the reading of it; and, 2d, the secretary was unable to draw up one.” The returns, however, indicate that the committee have been very faithful in the discharge of their duties, and that the schools are improving.

#### BURRILLVILLE.

This town is paying much attention to its schools, and they are, consequently, rapidly improving. It has a corps of female teachers not inferior to those of any town in the State.

## NEWPORT COUNTY.

## CITY OF NEWPORT.

The commissioner has had no report from this city. Here is one of the best High Schools for girls, in the whole country, and the system is well understood, and is very energetically operated.

## PORTSMOUTH.

The schools in this town are generally in a good condition.

## MIDDLETOWN.

No report. The returns, however, indicate that the committee have attended to all their duties, except this of report.

## TIVERTON.

There has been a division of this town, and some irregularities have undoubtedly grown out of this fact. This town printed its committees' report, from which no extracts are made.

## FALL RIVER.

This is a new town taken off from Tiverton, and there has been received neither report nor returns.

## LITTLE COMPTON.

No report.

## NEW-SHOREHAM.

The schools here are in more than an ordinarily prosperous state. The report of the committee was not printed, and only contained an account of the several schools.

## JAMESTOWN.

No report.

## WASHINGTON COUNTY.

## SOUTH KINGSTOWN.

The committee say, in their printed report—

“While we congratulate our fellow citizens on the progress of our Public Schools, we would call their attention to one fruitful source of evil still existing, and which is beyond our control. It is absenteeism. It will be seen, by referring to our annexed table, that the number of scholars registered in the schools of the town during the winter term, amounted to 883, while those in actual daily attendance are only 538, making 345, or more than 39 per cent. registered scholars absent daily.

Thus, a school of a hundred scholars, will average only about sixty in daily attendance: one of fifty, will average only about thirty. None except teachers, and those directly connected with school operations, can fully appreciate the extent of this evil.

In schools registering, as many of ours do, from fifty to eighty scholars, and taught by one person, the number of classes necessarily ranging from twenty to thirty, it requires all the skill and energy of the most successful teacher, to obtain a reasonable degree of advancement with only the ordinary hinderances, and a regular attendance. But where two or three of a class have been absent, while the teacher has, with much labor, explained a difficult lesson in arithmetic, or an important principle in grammar, on their return, they will either have to join the class in its advanced state, or by themselves receive the same instructions which the class had during their absence. The latter is certainly preferable. But this will take much time of the teacher, and necessarily shorten the already too short recitations of his classes.

From these facts, we think that no one can fail to see, that the absentee not only injures himself, but cripples the progress of the whole school, causing incalculable mischief to those anxiously striving, with all their energies, to avail themselves of the advantages due them from our public schools.

We earnestly hope that the interests of our public schools may be kept up, and greatly increased for the future. If there is any one branch of human affairs more than another that demands continued effort to secure a desirable progress, it is the cause of common education: and next to religion, it is the worthiest object upon which the energies of a free and independent people can be expended. May we not believe that the time is not far distant, when, not only the town committee, and each district trustee, but also every parent and guardian in the town, shall feel an appropriate share of responsibility for the promotion of this cause; and express the same by visiting and encouraging the schools; and by coöperating efficiently with the teachers employed therein.”

## WESTERLY.

The report of this town was not printed, but it represents the schools mainly in a prosperous condition, and gradually improving. The village of Westerly has a most excellent High School. This town employs a superintendent from whom much is expected.

## NORTH KINGSTOWN.

Report not printed. It, however, speaks in high terms of several schools, but condemns some school houses.

## CHARLESTOWN.

This town did not print its committee's report. The schools are, nevertheless, doing well.

## EXETER

Has some good schools, and many citizens who are fully awake to the subject of education. Its report was printed and well circulated, and cannot fail to be useful.

## HOPKINTON.

There is in this town an increasing interest on the part of the people to have good schools.

## RICHMOND.

The printed report merely makes mention of the several schools in order, but gives a very good account of them.

## KENT COUNTY.

## WARWICK.

Rev. G. A. Willard has been superintendent of schools here for several years, and they show his care.

## COVENTRY.

This town seems to be cherishing its schools, and making a good use of the money raised for their support. Report not printed.

## EAST GREENWICH.

The committee say—

“The greatest difficulty which your committee find in maintaining good schools, is in procuring competent teachers—those capable of governing and managing a school, maintaining order and discipline, without exciting discord and dissatisfaction, among the parents and inhabitants of the neighborhood. It is easy to judge of the mere literary proficiency of a young man who applies for a certificate of qualification, as a teacher; but to judge of his character in other respects—his judgment, his temper and disposition, his ability to govern and convey knowledge to the young mind—is a much more difficult matter, and many times we are unfortunate in our selections. But the incapacity of the teacher is by no means the only source of trouble in the free schools of this town. The coöperation of the parent with the teacher is always necessary in maintaining order and discipline.”

## WEST GREENWICH.

No report. There are, however, some excellent schools in this town, and all the districts, except about three, have new school houses.

## BRISTOL COUNTY.

## BRISTOL.

The schools here are well systematized, and admirably conducted. There are no better schools any where. The High School is excellent.

## WARREN.

The same may be said of this town as of Bristol, and its High School is unsurpassed in good order and good scholarship.

## BARRINGTON.

This very small town has good schools, which are in good condition. Report not printed.

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It will be seen by this imperfect sketch of reports, that the towns do not avail themselves of the privilege of printing their committees' reports as they should, and that they do not find their schools visited as they should. These two things ought not to be neglected. More attention should be paid to the moral character

of the teachers, and to moral instruction in school, and then we may safely expect that our public schools will do all that can reasonably be demanded of them; that they shall be most potent *assistants* of the people, in making all the children of our beloved State intelligent, virtuous, obedient to law, loyal to truth, energetic in business, gentle at home, and useful everywhere.

The following is the

### S U M M A R Y :

Amount appropriated from General Treasury to the several towns.....	\$50,930 52
Amount raised by town taxes.....	98,212 07
Amount received from registry taxes.....	11,184 91
Amount received from rate bills.....	7,393 52
Balances from last year.....	4,693 67
Total.....	\$172,414 69
Amount actually expended for support of schools, exclusive of repairs and building of school houses.....	\$167,519 75
Last year.....	\$148,346 98
Increase.....	19,172 77
Amount expended on school houses.....	32,517 75
Amount voted by towns next year.....	105,664 33
Last year.....	\$98,212 07
Increase.....	7,452 26
Number of scholars taught in summer schools.....	22,460
Reported last year.....	22,046
Increase.....	414
Average attendance.....	16,467
Last year.....	16,300
Increase.....	167
Number of scholars in winter schools.....	26,480
Reported last year.....	25,893
Increase.....	587
Average attendance.....	18,766
Last year.....	19,281
Decrease.....	515

OFFICE OF COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS, }  
 PROVIDENCE, September 10, 1857. }

ROBERT ALLYN,  
 Commissioner of Public Schools.

*To the Governor and the Honorable the General Assembly :—*

The Rev. Robert Allyn, late Commissioner of Public Schools, resigned his trust September 10, 1857. In the absence of His Excellency, Gov. Dyer, His Honor, Lieut. Governor Turner, appointed William R. Watson, Esq. to discharge the duties of the office till the return of the Governor.

After the return of the Governor, he tendered the appointment to the undersigned, who accepted it, and received a commission, bearing the date of October 17th, 1857. He entered immediately upon the discharge of his duties, and having been essentially aided by Mr. Watson, he has visited every district in the towns of North Providence, Johnston, Cranston and Scituate, and nearly every school in these towns. This visitation, the Commissioner expects to continue, till he has seen every district, and, if possible, every school in the State. It gives him great pleasure to acknowledge, that he has been most cheerfully and most essentially aided by school committees, trustees, and other friends of education ; and that he has received that kind and hearty coöperation, which promises to make these visits of far greater value than they could otherwise be. May he not hope for such aid, and such coöperation, in every part of the State? The undersigned deems it his duty to add, that till he has made such a survey of the State, as shall make him practically and thoroughly acquainted with the working of our Public School system, he ought not to occupy much time in reporting, in the language of the law, " to the General Assembly, upon the state and condition of the schools and education, with plans and suggestions for their improvement."

Respectfully submitted,

JOHN KINGSBURY,

Commissioner of Public Schools.

Providence, January 22d, 1858.



*Abstract of the Returns of the Public Schools in Rhode Island, for the Year ending April 30, 1857.*

TABLE I.—FINANCIAL STATISTICS.

AMES OF TOWNS.												
EVIDENCE COUNTY.												
Amount received from the General Treasury.	Amount raised by Town Tax.	Amount raised from Registry Taxes.	Amount raised by Rate Bills.	Balance unexpended from last year.	Total amt't from all sources for Public Schools.	Amount actually expended, exclusive of money for building and re-pairing.	Amount of money expended on School Houses.	Amount voted by towns for the next year.	Apporportionment of \$15,000 to districts for next year.	Apporportionment of \$35,000, according to population, for next year.	Total apporportioned from Gen'l Treasury for next year.	
\$10,621 56	\$60,000 00	\$9,592 85	.....	.....	\$74,214 41	\$74,214 41	\$19,300 98	\$65,000 00	\$893 78	\$9,716 05	\$10,600 83	
2,251 50	5,038 02	436 00	212 50	.....	7,938 02	7,326 87	780 00	4,500 00	388 60	1,857 50	2,246 10	
4,137 19	4,500 00	757 56	.....	.....	9,394 75	9,394 75	.....	4,500 00	1,360 10	2,759 19	4,119 29	
2,303 27	2,000 00	445 18	.....	.....	4,811 45	4,820 45	390 00	2,000 00	777 20	1,578 87	2,356 07	
1,784 77	900 00	551 00	431 00	876 67	4,513 44	3,735 77	400 00	900 00	738 34	1,026 74	1,765 08	
1,519 03	3,000 00	312 55	.....	505 38	5,366 96	5,366 96	4,350 00	3,500 00	427 46	1,115 96	1,543 42	
1,266 31	500 00	232 55	.....	.....	1,999 06	1,999 06	.....	500 00	505 18	752 51	1,257 69	
1,214 35	200 00	220 32	400 00	66 46	2,101 13	2,034 67	.....	200 00	582 90	623 80	1,206 70	
1,181 61	1,181 18	290 41	227 95	277 78	2,063 36	2,021 85	700 00	113 18	669 48	475 35	1,117 83	
1,455 78	600 00	308 37	.....	192 45	2,506 60	2,024 15	.....	800 00	621 76	805 86	1,457 62	
Totals.....												
\$27,870 47	\$76,872 10	\$7,117 02	\$1,271 45	\$1,918 71	\$115,049 78	\$114,138 94	\$25,929 98	\$82,013 18	\$6,994 80	\$20,771 83	\$27,709 63	
PORT COUNTY.												
\$2,319 09	\$8,000 00	\$468 00	\$700 36	\$472 55	\$11,900 00	\$10,455 07	\$1,774 25	\$9,000 00	\$233 16	\$2,122 23	\$2,355 30	
724 61	300 00	20 05	130 06	26 82	1,201 54	1,808 00	.....	300 00	272 02	449 02	721 04	
373 25	250 00	77 81	316 31	.....	1,017 37	984 37	.....	200 00	194 30	189 41	388 71	
2,011 10	2,000 00	219 57	102 95	21 00	4,201 02	4,333 81	102 59	1,000 00	406 32	522 41	988 73	
.....	.....	237 00	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1,500 00	233 16	780 03	1,013 19	
750 57	250 00	28 08	686 36	.....	1,715 61	1,670 56	300 00	300 00	388 60	356 88	745 48	
504 61	100 00	47 00	315 00	.....	1,026 61	968 76	60 00	300 00	194 30	360 31	563 61	
146 00	25 00	11 82	106 22	1 50	283 54	291 74	.....	25 00	77 72	67 28	145 00	
Totals.....												
\$61,884 24	\$10,925 00	\$1,112 03	\$2,260 50	\$521 87	\$21,815 20	\$20,632 40	\$2,260 84	\$12,635 00	\$2,039 28	\$4,866 97	\$6,010 15	

	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
<b>West.</b>	143 00	144 00	145 00	146 00	147 00	148 00	149 00	150 00	151 00	152 00	153 00	154 00	155 00	156 00
<b>Charlestown.</b>	58 85	58 85	58 85	58 85	58 85	58 85	58 85	58 85	58 85	58 85	58 85	58 85	58 85	58 85
<b>Hopkinton.</b>	126 00	126 00	126 00	126 00	126 00	126 00	126 00	126 00	126 00	126 00	126 00	126 00	126 00	126 00
<b>Rochester.</b>	126 00	126 00	126 00	126 00	126 00	126 00	126 00	126 00	126 00	126 00	126 00	126 00	126 00	126 00
<b>Richmond.</b>	126 00	126 00	126 00	126 00	126 00	126 00	126 00	126 00	126 00	126 00	126 00	126 00	126 00	126 00
<b>Totals.</b>	\$8,600 13	\$1,083 03	\$1,233 88	\$1,831 38	\$1,213 91	\$1,671 33	\$13,840 33	\$2,033 00	\$1,900 81	\$3,575 12	\$4,080 46	\$7,684 57	\$1,275 18	\$1,275 18
<b>KENT COUNTY.</b>														
<b>Warwick.</b>	\$2,346 41	\$1,500 00	\$695 00	\$355 00	\$333 09	\$5,279 50	\$1,511 41	\$2,655 35	\$2,000 31	\$699 48	\$811 00	\$2,338 76	\$1,275 18	\$1,275 18
<b>Corvally.</b>	1,471 00	200 34	231 88	659 77	202 27	2,835 26	2,655 37	2,052 66	2,052 66	1,416 32	655 24	1,275 18	655 24	655 24
<b>East Greenwich.</b>	740 82	181 60	100 00	.....	.....	1,022 42	1,022 42	830 00	830 00	191 30	544 82	739 12	655 24	655 24
<b>West Greenwich.</b>	707 14	100 00	87 20	.....	.....	1,352 28	1,352 28	833 00	100 00	465 32	324 70	701 02	655 24	655 24
<b>Totals.</b>	\$5,335 37	\$1,981 91	\$1,114 08	\$1,034 77	\$983 30	\$10,480 46	\$1,582 48	\$993 00	\$3,075 34	\$1,913 00	\$3,466 38	\$5,400 38	\$1,275 18	\$1,275 18
<b>BRISTOL COUNTY.</b>														
<b>Bristol.</b>	\$1,238 34	\$1,000 00	\$359 17	\$759 03	\$55 85	\$6,412 39	\$5,453 03	\$807 39	\$1,300 00	\$194 30	\$1,080 86	\$1,275 18	655 24	655 24
<b>Warren.</b>	701 42	2,500 00	128 70	.....	.....	3,330 12	3,088 72	407 51	2,500 00	116 58	148 45	699 89	655 24	655 24
<b>Barrington.</b>	266 56	250 00	19 13	110 63	.....	646 32	623 75	.....	250 00	116 58	148 45	265 03	655 24	655 24
<b>Totals.</b>	\$2,206 32	\$6,750 00	\$507 00	\$869 66	\$55 85	\$10,388 83	\$9,275 50	\$1,301 93	\$7,030 00	\$497 48	\$1,812 62	\$2,240 08	655 24	655 24

## RECAPITULATION BY COUNTIES.

Providence County.....	\$27,870.47	\$76,872.10	\$7,117.02	\$1,271.45	\$1,918.74	\$115,049.78	\$114,138.91	\$25,929.98	\$82,013.18	\$6,994.80	\$20,771.83	\$27,709.63
"          "          ".....	6,800.23	10,925.00	1,333.88	2,305.20	521.87	21,815.20	20,632.40	2,236.81	12,625.51	2,039.58	4,856.57	6,914.15
Newport                  .....	8,689.13	1,683.03	1,313.88	1,831.36	1,213.91	14,671.33	13,840.33	2,053.00	1,300.81	3,575.12	4,084.46	7,664.57
Washington              .....	5,355.37	1,981.94	1,114.08	1,051.77	983.30	10,480.46	9,382.48	993.00	2,075.34	1,943.00	3,488.38	5,409.38
"          "          ".....	2,306.32	0,750.00	507.00	869.66	55.85	10,388.83	9,275.50	1,304.93	7,050.00	427.46	1,812.62	2,240.08
Kent												
Kent												
"          "          ".....	\$50,930.52	\$98,212.07	\$11,184.91	\$7,303.52	\$4,693.67	\$172,414.69	\$167,519.65	\$32,517.75	\$105,864.33	\$14,999.96	\$34,996.89	\$49,939.81
Totals.....												

*Abstract of the Returns of Public Schools in Rhode Island, for the Year  
ending April 30, 1857.*

NO. OF TOWNS.	TABLE II. SUMMER SCHOOL STATISTICS.						TABLE III. WINTER SCHOOL STATISTICS.					
	No. of Male Teachers.	No. of Female Teachers.	No. of Boys.	No. of Girls.	Whole No.	Average.	No. of Male Teachers.	No. of Female Teachers.	No. of Boys.	No. of Girls.	Whole No.	Average.
PROVIDENCE COUNTY.												
Providence.....	12	120	.....	.....	6,700	5,312	12	120	.....	.....	6,845	5,388
North Providence.....	5	21	616	626	1,272	1,086	10	23	1197	1012	2,109	1,310
Smithfield.....	6	37	.....	.....	2,506	1,705	23	23	.....	.....	2,514	1,705
Cumberland.....	3	17	469	499	968	825	7	19	633	541	1,178	806
Scituate.....	3	15	317	318	635	457	14	6	503	370	873	571
Cranston.....	1	21	569	571	1,141	829	2	21	679	579	1,108	747
Johnston.....	1	7	.....	.....	251	181	8	3	.....	.....	364	249
Glocester.....	1	16	230	255	485	351	11	5	238	192	430	333
Foster.....	0	15	118	196	314	225	15	3	273	216	489	311
Burrillville.....	0	15	287	309	597	378	7	6	217	174	391	285
Totals.....	32	287	.....	.....	11,919	11,351	108	229	.....	.....	16,301	11,805
NEWPORT COUNTY.												
Newport.....	1	29	.....	.....	989	805	4	20	.....	.....	660	805
Portsmouth.....	2	5	188	101	292	177	7	0	188	101	292	178
Middletown.....	0	5	60	83	143	61	5	0	86	31	126	79
Tiverton.....	.....	12	173	193	366	230	9	2	213	183	426	294
Fall River.....	3	7	.....	.....	392	371	4	9	.....	.....	698	422
Little Compton.....	1	9	93	136	229	113	7	3	166	106	272	186
New Shoreham.....	0	5	183	111	297	181	5	0	127	161	288	207
Jamestown.....	0	2	27	17	44	33	2	0	25	8	33	25
Totals.....	10	65	.....	.....	2,952	2,007	43	31	.....	.....	3,091	2,196
WASHINGTON COUNTY.												
South Kingstown.....	1	16	236	298	538	381	16	4	458	301	759	440
Westerly.....	.....	13	76	63	139	85	11	5	318	278	624	507
North Kingstown.....	.....	7	99	117	216	161	8	7	312	262	544	357
Exeter.....	1	7	99	103	202	132	10	2	239	136	375	229
Charlestown.....	2	3	55	95	150	106	6	1	102	79	181	129
Hopkinton.....	3	6	119	196	315	202	9	3	328	299	597	413
Richmond.....	4	4	116	111	260	186	11	0	181	151	335	176
Totals.....	11	56	.....	.....	1,870	1,253	71	22	.....	.....	3,117	2,251
KENT COUNTY.												
Warwick.....	5	12	424	417	871	515	8	12	751	602	1,363	930
Coventry.....	2	8	191	189	371	238	12	4	250	201	451	286
East Greenwich.....	0	4	155	52	207	89	3	4	220	117	367	233
West Greenwich.....	1	2	26	26	52	31	10	2	150	110	260	163
Totals.....	8	26	.....	.....	1,501	897	33	22	.....	.....	2,441	1,612
BRISTOL COUNTY.												
Bristol.....	5	11	338	355	685	573	5	13	375	309	684	578
Warren.....	1	9	216	193	406	307	3	7	236	195	421	333
Barrington.....	0	3	51	57	111	79	0	3	60	45	125	81
Totals.....	6	23	.....	.....	1,200	959	8	23	.....	.....	1,230	992

**RECAPITULATION BY COUNTIES.**

Providence County.....	32	287	.....	.....	11,919	11,351	108	229	.....	.....	16,301	11,805
Newport.....	10	65	.....	.....	2,952	2,007	43	31	.....	.....	3,091	2,196
Washington.....	11	56	.....	.....	1,870	1,253	71	22	.....	.....	3,117	2,251
Kent.....	8	26	.....	.....	1,501	897	33	22	.....	.....	2,441	1,612
Bristol.....	6	23	.....	.....	1,200	959	8	23	.....	.....	1,230	992
Totals.....	70	457	.....	.....	21,442	15,467	263	327	.....	.....	26,180	19,855

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FOURTEENTH  
ANNUAL REPORT  
ON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

*In Rhode Island,*

MADE TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

AT ITS

JANUARY SESSION, A. D. 1860.

PROVIDENCE:  
KNOWLES, ANTHONY & CO., STATE PRINTERS.  
1859.



FOURTEENTH  
ANNUAL REPORT  
for 1858  
ON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

*In Rhode Island,*

MADE TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

AT ITS

JANUARY SESSION, A. D. 1859.

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PROVIDENCE:  
KNOWLES, ANTHONY & CO., STATE PRINTERS.  
1859.



# REPORT.

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*To His Excellency the Governor, and the }  
Honorable the General Assembly.*

GENTLEMEN :—

In conformity with the requirement of law, I beg leave to present the Fourteenth Annual Report upon the state and condition of our Public Schools.

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Having entered upon the duties of this office at a period of time, when, by the labors of my predecessors and others, our school law had been made as perfect as any with which I was acquainted, it seemed to be my first duty to inquire into the practical working of our school system, and to ascertain, if possible, how far the schools corresponded with the facilities provided by law for their improve-





# REPORT.

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*To His Excellency the Governor, and the }  
Honorable the General Assembly.*

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ment. This knowledge could be gained in no other way so well as by visitation and personal observation.

In effecting this object, I generally addressed a note to the chairman or clerk of the school committee of a particular town, or to some other person known to be a friend to public schools, to inquire when it would be practicable for him to aid me in visiting the schools of that town. Having learned this fact, I threw myself at once upon the efficient services of this gentleman, until the work in that town was finished. Sometimes in the larger towns, this labor was divided between several persons; but in others, a single individual has not only accompanied, but also conveyed me to every district and to every school house. In order to do this, there has been no small amount of personal sacrifice. The farmer has left his plough, the physician his practice, the clergyman his parish; and other classes of men have left equally important and pressing engagements. Whenever it has been justified by circumstances, public meetings have been held in the evenings, at such places as were most favorable for collecting numbers. These meetings have been addressed by myself and others who have kindly volunteered their aid, and, there is reason to believe, have been followed by favorable results. An opportunity has thus been offered for the presentation and free discussion of such topics connected with education as were of local as well as of universal interest. Many of the provisions of the school law have been explained; difficulties have been removed from the minds of some persons; parents have been urged to a more hearty co-operation with teachers and school officers; information has been given of the progress of education in other places; in short, all those topics have been introduced, upon the right understanding of which, the continued progress and the highest welfare of our public schools depend.

I have seen the school houses, their locations and their surroundings, and know, from personal observation, their present condition. It is, therefore, not difficult to say, how many of them are really adapted to the purposes of education, and how many of them ought to be immediately repaired or supplanted by new ones. I have also entered the schools and seen them in a great variety of circumstances. I have stayed long enough in each to obtain some indication both of the ability and character of teachers, and the progress, tone of feeling and character of the scholars. It may be said, that too

little time has been given to each school to make the knowledge gained of any practical value. In reply, it may be said, that the comparatively short time thus spent in each school, is more valuable as a basis of future action, than a much larger portion of time spent at such examinations as take place at the close of a term. A good teacher and a good school cannot be placed in a situation so unfavorable by a short and unexpected visit, that there will not be, to those who are accustomed to judge skillfully, indications of good manifesting themselves in many and different directions. On the other hand, a poor teacher and a poor school cannot be kept on their guard so strictly, even for a few minutes, without in some way showing their true character. This visitation, as rapid as it has been, has occupied a large part of my time for an entire year; and since the visitation of schools is only one of the many duties enjoined upon the Commissioner of Public Schools, it must be evident to all, that each school can have but a limited share of time devoted exclusively to itself. Besides, it may not be improper to add, that a long and varied personal experience in teaching, gives me some advantages in forming a just though rapid estimate of the character both of teachers and scholars.

The long rides with school officers and other friends of education, rendered necessary by such a mode of visitation, have been peculiarly favorable for a free consultation upon every topic and feature of the school system. Such an interchange of thought has been serviceable to both parties. It has enabled me to explain more fully the meaning of the school law, to suggest methods of settling difficulties and removing obstacles which oppose the progress of education, to urge upon committees the importance of the frequent examination of schools and especially of a thorough and careful examination of teachers, as a measure, upon which, more than any other, the real value of our public schools now depends. On the other hand, they have furnished me from their personal knowledge and experience, such local information as has been of the highest value, and yet such as could be obtained in no other manner so well.

In my visits to schools, I have requested teachers to proceed in their lessons and exercises just as they would if no visitors were present. One exercise, on this condition, is worth many at set examinations or on other occasions when teachers proceed to display

their best classes and their most gifted scholars. It is pardonable in teachers, to desire their schools to appear well. It is pardonable when this desire leads them to place before visitors the best results of their labors. But those who wish to gain a true knowledge of a school, whose object is information and not gratification, will prefer to see a school as near as possible in the condition in which it would appear if there were no other persons but teachers and scholars present.

In most of the schools which I visited, I have made short addresses to the scholars. In such cases, I endeavored to select some topic which was suggested by the occasion—one which would be of value both to teacher and scholars. Among the topics thus selected have been the following: The importance of punctual and regular attendance; habits of neatness and order; careful preparation of lessons; attention, as the basis of all knowledge; obedience, truthfulness, and other features of moral character;—all of which are no less important to teachers than to scholars.

I would not, however, cherish an overweening confidence in the conclusions which have been drawn from so rapid a survey of the practical working of our system of public schools. The subject is one of too great difficulty to be mastered in so short a period of time, and the liability to error too great, to justify a dogmatical expression of my opinions. I shall, therefore, occupy less time in making a report, and limit myself, both in the selection of topics for consideration and in the space devoted to each topic. This course I deem most respectful to the General Assembly, and most just to myself.

It is just fifteen years since the Hon. Henry Barnard commenced his labors in this State. At that period, there was, according to his first report, no systematic digest of the school law; no restriction which required the towns to raise money for the support of schools, as a condition of receiving the State appropriation; no provision for training or improving teachers by means of Institutes and Normal Schools; no check, to hinder districts from subdividing till their strength was vitally impaired; and no law to prevent schools from being kept in places which were totally unfit for school purposes. The school houses were, almost universally, badly located, too small, badly lighted, not properly ventilated, imperfectly warmed, furnished with seats and desks not properly

adjusted to each other, not provided with black-boards, maps, clocks, thermometers, and deficient in all those *indoor* and *outdoor* arrangements which promote habits of order and neatness, and cultivate delicacy of manners and refinement of feeling. In some districts, an apartment in an old shop or dwelling house was fitted up as a school room; and in eleven towns, the school houses, such as they were, were owned by proprietors, to whom, in many instances, the districts paid in rent a larger amount than would have been the interest on the cost of a new and commodious school house. After the passage of the school act in 1844, which authorized districts to purchase, repair, build and furnish school houses, the progress of improvement was so rapid that Mr. Barnard predicted, that if the same progress could be made for three years more, Rhode Island could show, in proportion to the number of school districts, more specimens of good houses, and fewer dilapidated, inconvenient and unhealthy structures of this kind, than any other State. This prediction was without doubt fulfilled, yet there are some school houses in the State now, to which Mr. Barnard's unfavorable description applies as well to-day as it did fifteen years ago. It may be that the prediction itself, uttered with the praiseworthy desire of encouraging and stimulating the people of the State, together with the numerous compliments bestowed upon us by persons from abroad for what was really accomplished in that period, may have, instead of producing the intended effect, lulled into inactivity and self-complacency those very districts which it ought to have aroused. The credit which is due to those districts and those towns which did improve their schools, has been assumed as belonging to the whole State. Those districts which have not kept pace with the current improvements of the age, so far from indulging feelings of satisfaction in what others have done, and making it a reason for their own inactivity, ought to be aroused to action by the simple fact alone, that they are in painful contrast with the general progress. Rhode Island has done well. She takes a high rank among her sister states in furnishing the inestimable privileges of a good common school education to every child in the State. This credit, however, is not due equally to all the towns and districts. It is due in spite of those towns and districts which as yet remain comparatively indifferent.

A large number of our school houses are creditable specimens of school architecture. They are commodious, well arranged, well adapted to school purposes, furnished with maps, black boards, and other conveniences, and some of them are beautifully located, with good play grounds adorned with shade trees. Many of them have been erected at a cost quite as great as the means of the district will justify. Two or three, perhaps, have exceeded the ability of the districts, so that they are a standing bugbear to all further improvement in their neighborhoods. They are like expensive dwelling houses, whose owners have so crippled themselves in building that they cannot afford to live in their houses after they have been built. In respect to such school houses, the standing argument is, we have expended so much money in building our house, that we cannot afford to tax ourselves for a good school. Happily, the number is very small where there is the least ground of complaint on this point. A considerable number of the school houses which have recently been built or repaired, have cost less than what is absolute economy in expenditure. This is true in regard to the size of the structures, their location, play grounds, out houses, fences, and especially their interior arrangements. In some of the new houses there are no maps, except one of Rhode Island, furnished at the expense of the State, and not a single work of reference, even a dictionary of the English language. Notwithstanding all that has been done to improve our school houses, there are many which are entirely unfit places for the education of children, since in them these children are to spend so many of the precious hours of their lives. They are old, needing repairs even for a temporary occupancy; cramped in size, with uneven floors which allow a large ventilation; having desks arranged on the sides of the room, or even in the still more ancient method, on the outside of the room, with the old fashioned slab seats. Some of them are located in the highway, where land is not worth ten dollars an acre, in the most desolate place in the district, and are destitute of all attraction both *without* and *within*. It is gratifying to be able to report that the progress of improvement has, within the past year, reached some of these districts. Several of them have repaired their houses or built new ones, and two or three districts which have never owned a school house before, are now the fortunate owners of such a structure. There is reason to believe

that there are others which are taking measures that will prove successful in securing the same blessing; so that shortly it may be said that there is not a district in the State, which does not possess a creditable school house.

The most remarkable circumstance to be noticed in this connection, is the great contrast, not so much between the structure and condition of the school houses of the different towns—though there is here enough to challenge attention—as between the structure and condition of the school houses of the same towns, and sometimes between those of adjacent districts. Why is it so? Here is the same school law operating equally for the good of both, the same school committee to whom the supervision of each is committed. In the one district you will find the school house beautiful, commodious, everything without and within being so arranged as to attract and win the hearts of the young. In the very next district everything is reversed. Instead of attraction, the prevailing principle, as seen in the school house and its surroundings, is repulsion. Again it may be asked, why is it so? It is found on inquiry, that there is an equal amount of wealth in both districts, an equal number of children to be educated, and that these children are equally dependent upon their education for the stations in life which they are to occupy. It may be found that all this difference may be traced to the activity, energy and liberality of a single individual. May such individuals be multiplied till not a discreditable school house can be found in Rhode Island.

It is also worthy of notice that in some of the towns there is a great contrast between the school houses and dwelling houses. As you enter these towns, the impression made on your mind by so many excellent, commodious and elegant dwelling houses, is, that there must be not only competence but abundance, and even great wealth. You draw the very natural conclusion, that here, at least, you will find good if not beautiful school houses. In this you are quite liable to labor under a mistake; for there are towns where the dwelling houses and out houses are indicative of wealth, and yet the school houses are among the very poorest in the State. Whenever this contrast is found, it is not owing to want of wealth, but of something better,—a knowledge of the true manner of using wealth. Such a people forget that one of the most appropriate ways of indicating the wealth and resources of a town is to build



situation he may be placed. There will be something, not always easily definable, which will show that superiority. On the other hand, want of knowledge or of skill, will be apparent in spite of excuses, apologies or concealment. In speaking of teachers, I know that great care and discrimination are necessary. They are required to perform a most difficult work in the most difficult circumstances. The public expect them to have talents and attainments of the highest order, and to be satisfied with a remuneration which persons of inferior talents and attainments, in other avocations, would despise. A considerable change for the better has taken place in the last fifteen years, yet the compensation of teachers is now less than that of any class of persons who require, for success, an equal amount of talent, education and character. There are, in every State, two classes of teachers,—the permanent and the temporary. The former are engaged in cities and large towns. The latter are required for our rural districts, where the schools are kept only a part of the year. It is with this latter class that there is the greatest deficiency; for there is little to encourage this class to make high attainments in knowledge, unless they hope by their superior skill to be advanced to the class of permanent teachers. In this class, too, there is sometimes a short-sightedness which operates unfavorably in regard to their improvement. They can obtain schools readily with their present acquirements. Why should they be anxious for any further knowledge? They forget that there is in society a constant progress, and that those who are competent to instruct, to-day, will not be to-morrow, unless they have made corresponding additions to their stock of knowledge. Even in the rural districts, there is a progress which will ultimately visit these teachers with retribution. They will soon fall behind the times, and be set aside for those who have been awake to this exigency and have prepared for it. Though there are some districts which fail to discriminate between the good and the poor teacher, the number is fast diminishing. They are like people who have always been accustomed to drink impure water and therefore do not properly appreciate the pure. But this cannot long remain so. A knowledge of the difference will in each case, in due time, come; and then the inferior will be set aside as useless. To extend this kind of knowledge is the duty of every friend of public schools.

good school houses and maintain good schools. If such a people wish to give additional value to their farms and other property, they can do it much more effectually by erecting good school houses and sustaining good schools, than by building luxurious and showy private residences. Good schools will add to the pecuniary value of farms and other property in their immediate neighborhood ; but, what is of far greater consequence, they will raise the standard of intellectual and moral excellence. The welfare of children should never be weighed in the scales of pecuniary gain or loss. There is something infinitely higher and better than money—and *that* is, character. It is important that districts should know, that the school committee of each town have the power to withhold the appropriation of public money, till a house is repaired or a new one built which satisfies them ; and that this committee are unfaithful to the State, whenever they allow a school to be kept, year after year, in an unsuitable place, and yet continue to make the usual appropriation. But the inquiry is sometimes made, what remedy is there if a district do not choose to repair or build, after their house has been condemned by the school committee ? Let said district be divided into as many parts as shall be convenient, and let these parts be attached to other adjoining districts. Let the people of this divided district be informed of their liability to be taxed in those districts where they are placed, and they will soon learn that it will be cheaper, wiser and better to repair or build a school house for themselves. The school committee, after putting a school house under an interdict, should allow the district a reasonable time for them to repair or to build. The district should have set before them the full consequences of neglect, before the committee proceed to use extreme measures. But the committee are unfaithful to their trust when they wait a longer time than is really necessary.

It is of the utmost importance that good teachers be provided for our schools. A good teacher in a poor school house is a far greater blessing than a good house with a poor teacher. In fact, a poor teacher is no blessing at all. He is always directly in the way of the employment of a good one. My visitation has brought me into contact with many teachers. I have seen them under a great variety of circumstances, and have verified the truth, that a good teacher will reveal his superiority, in whatever

situation he may be placed. There will be something, not always easily definable, which will show that superiority. On the other hand, want of knowledge or of skill, will be apparent in spite of excuses, apologies or concealment. In speaking of teachers, I know that great care and discrimination are necessary. They are required to perform a most difficult work in the most difficult circumstances. The public expect them to have talents and attainments of the highest order, and to be satisfied with a remuneration which persons of inferior talents and attainments, in other avocations, would despise. A considerable change for the better has taken place in the last fifteen years, yet the compensation of teachers is now less than that of any class of persons who require, for success, an equal amount of talent, education and character. There are, in every State, two classes of teachers,—the permanent and the temporary. The former are engaged in cities and large towns. The latter are required for our rural districts, where the schools are kept only a part of the year. It is with this latter class that there is the greatest deficiency; for there is little to encourage this class to make high attainments in knowledge, unless they hope by their superior skill to be advanced to the class of permanent teachers. In this class, too, there is sometimes a short-sightedness which operates unfavorably in regard to their improvement. They can obtain schools readily with their present acquirements. Why should they be anxious for any further knowledge? They forget that there is in society a constant progress, and that those who are competent to instruct, to-day, will not be to-morrow, unless they have made corresponding additions to their stock of knowledge. Even in the rural districts, there is a progress which will ultimately visit these teachers with retribution. They will soon fall behind the times, and be set aside for those who have been awake to this exigency and have prepared for it. Though there are some districts which fail to discriminate between the good and the poor teacher, the number is fast diminishing. They are like people who have always been accustomed to drink impure water and therefore do not properly appreciate the pure. But this cannot long remain so. A knowledge of the difference will in each case, in due time, come; and then the inferior will be set aside as useless. To extend this kind of knowledge is the duty of every friend of public schools.

The teachers of this State, as a body, are deserving of the highest respect. Many of them are well educated, and their labors have been crowned with eminent success. It is not too much to say, that they will sustain a favorable comparison with the teachers of any other State. But after making this acknowledgment and every reasonable allowance, both in respect to teachers and schools, it is my duty to say that the great want, in the practical working of our system of public schools, is a greater number of well educated teachers. Nor can the want of a better education always be attributed to them. They are, many of them, invited to teach, without having had any other advantages than those which were furnished by the district school which they have attended; and perhaps this school has never had a teacher who might, in any sense, be regarded as a model teacher. Young persons, therefore, of both sexes, are tempted to commence teaching, when, if they had been well instructed, they would see that they ought to begin a course of special preparation for that purpose. It is in this way, poor schools are perpetuated, and the standard of teaching is kept low. Such teachers are usually the last to make any effort to improve themselves. Well satisfied with themselves, they are seldom or never found at our Institutes or other places of educational improvement. One of the most startling circumstances in the history of teachers, is the fact that the best educated and most successful are those who are ready to make the greatest efforts for their improvement. Thus, the difference which is apparent between these classes of teachers at their first setting out, is greatly increased by their subsequent conduct;—the one class rising higher and higher by their personal efforts to improve, the other sinking lower and lower, not only by the natural effect of inaction, but also by the force of contrast with those teachers who have kept pace with the progress of improvement. There can be no doubt that many who engage in teaching, need the advantages of a better education. They should be urged to undertake this, and encouraged in the undertaking. Where shall this higher education, this preparation for teaching, be obtained? Shall it be obtained at our Academies and High Schools? Certainly, in many instances, this can be done. It gives me pleasure to bear testimony to the great service which these Institutions have rendered to the State, simply in furnishing a better class of teachers. But these institutions must have a broader basis than what is necessary for the mere

preparation of teachers. They must adapt their courses of instruction to the majority of those who resort to them. Something may be done by forming special classes of those who wish to teach; but this will be a special work, and so far as it is, there will be an encroachment on the time and attention demanded by the general courses of instruction. It will, therefore, be too great a sacrifice for these institutions to make, while this class of persons will not receive all the advantages which they need. The attempt to engraft this kind of instruction on existing institutions has everywhere proved a failure or met with only indifferent success. It has hence become the settled opinion of those who have the largest experience and the most perfect knowledge on this subject, that there must be a special agency for training and preparing teachers. This agency is the Normal School, an institution where none are admitted but those who are preparing to teach. Though regarded as an experiment at first, success has demonstrated the necessity of the Normal School, wherever it is the design to raise the entire mass of teachers to a higher level of knowledge and character. The claims of Normal Schools, therefore, should be candidly and carefully considered. Nor should these claims be misunderstood. Normal Schools are not the rivals of colleges or even of academies. Nor are they designed as a substitute for either of these institutions. Without infringing at all upon any other institutions, they have an important and an appropriate sphere of their own. They meet a demand from a class of persons of both sexes which cannot be met, or is met but imperfectly in any other way. Designed exclusively for those, who, wishing to teach, do not find themselves sufficiently well qualified; and having every arrangement with reference to this end, they have advantages which no other place of learning can present. This leads me to the consideration of our own State Normal School. It is now more than four years since it was organized. During this period it has been subjected to the disadvantage of having had its location changed, and its appropriation cut down. From both of these causes, it is easy to see that its immediate success has been imperilled. Yet it has triumphed over these and all other obstacles. It has already sent out, into different parts of the State, a sufficient number of good teachers to show the value of the training and instruction which are given there. No one who is competent to judge of the results which may reasonably be expected of such an institu-

tion, and at the same time who has taken the necessary steps to enable himself to be a judge of these results, can fail to give his verdict in favor of the school. Its success has exceeded the most sanguine expectation of its true friends.

In this connection, it is proper to say that a few persons have attended this school for short periods of time,—sometimes not more than a week,—and have gone forth to engage in teaching as Normal scholars. The failure of such teachers is no more to be charged to the discredit of the Normal School, than a counterfeit bank bill is to be charged to the discredit of a bank in high standing. The counterfeit, in both cases, is indirect testimony in favor of both institutions. There would be no counterfeits if there were no genuine currency. It may be true, also, that some individuals who have spent a longer time at the Normal School, have failed to become good teachers. This may be true, and not diminish aught of the credit which is due to this institution. It is a truth, and the sooner it is recognized the better, that some persons were never born to teach. They may be very worthy and very estimable persons, and yet, by natural temperament and organization, be wholly unfitted for this special work. No Normal School, no institution of learning can afford to become responsible for the failure of such persons. The Normal School can make them better teachers than they would otherwise become; but that is all it can do, since it lays no claim to working miracles. It is important that all who hire or examine teachers that claim to be Normal scholars, should inquire for letters of commendation from the principal; and further, that they should be careful to see how far the commendation extends, and to what particular department of instruction it applies. These letters must necessarily be of different grades. This will arise from the amount of knowledge scholars possess when they enter the school; the greater or less facility which they have for acquiring knowledge; and the different lengths of time which they spend in the school.

My visitation enables me to bear strong testimony in favor of the training and instruction which are given in our Normal School. I am convinced that it is an instrumentality in the cause of public schools which cannot be, at present, rightly estimated. The time is not far distant, however, when the people of the State will feel that no money for the promotion of education, is more wisely expended than that which is appropriated to the support of the Normal School.

They will see that from such an expenditure, they are themselves to reap special blessings which are to come into their own households. This is not the work of a day. Time must be given, not only for the tree to be planted, but also for its fruit to come to maturity. If it were otherwise, it would be contrary to the analogy of other human institutions.

The present condition of the school is very satisfactory. Its location is not favorable for securing the largest possible number of scholars; but, at no time since its organization, have the courses of instruction been more thorough, practical and elevated. The instructors are all, not only highly qualified for the particular situations which they fill, but there is among them that happy blending together of different talents, attainments and character, which affords the best possible guaranty of present and future success. I must, therefore, bespeak for it, the fostering care of the legislature and the continued regard of all friends of public schools. Let it be repeated, that the great want in the practical working of our system of public schools, is a greater number of well trained and educated teachers. It is of little consequence where this preparation is obtained. If those who teach, have sterling character, are happily adapted to inspire children with the love of knowledge and of excellence, and know how to teach and govern a school, no barrier will be placed in their way because they were not trained in the Normal School. They will be welcomed to the ranks of teachers and made standard bearers in the march of educational improvement. On the other hand, if teachers have not this character, and do not know how to teach and govern, they will not be tolerated in their incompetence because they may have attended the Normal School.

It must be admitted that there are some persons who seem born to be teachers; who, with very few advantages, will train and educate themselves for eminent success. Their example is often quoted to show that special training is unnecessary. Now, these very persons might save a vast amount of time and labor by receiving such special training. But they will excel, whether so instructed or not. It is not so with the majority of those who are to teach. If they ever become successful teachers, they must have special preparation for it. This may be obtained at some High School, academy or college. But the majority of those who teach, especially in rural districts, need just the training and instruction which are afforded

at our Normal School. It is, therefore, hoped and expected that school committees and others will encourage and urge young persons of both sexes to avail themselves of the advantages thus provided for them by the wisdom and bounty of the State. Should this be done, it would not be long before the striking contrasts now seen in many schools, would be seen no longer. The introduction of a good teacher into one district, would be followed by the introduction of a good teacher into every district of a town, and popular sentiment would be in harmony with the true end of education. Then might we reasonably hope that all would begin to know that education does not consist in filling the mind with facts and ideas, but in drawing out and cultivating the powers of the mind ; that the mental activity produced in school by a good teacher, is something more than a substitute for rules of order or the infliction of penalties; that dullness and stupidity on the part of teachers, lead to idleness and mischief on the part of scholars; and that if there is mental activity in a poor school, it will chiefly be displayed in counter-working the teacher and evading his laws.

My visitation has brought me into an intimate relation with the school committees of the several towns. It may be said of them, in general, that they are a laborious and self-denying body of men. Nothing but a strong desire for the public good, could induce men who are qualified, to continue, year after year, in this office. Selfish and unworthy motives may sometimes stimulate them to undertake its duties; but unrequited labor, united with the liability to be censured for the best efforts to do right, will soon destroy the zeal of such men. To labor perseveringly under difficulties of this nature, requires a better motive than selfishness. Faithful men, are also liable to be driven from this office for their best deeds. Ignorance, prejudice, party spirit and sometimes avarice, all combine to remove them from a position which they took with reluctance and which they have retained without reward. Great praise is, therefore, due to those towns, which have, for a succession of years, sustained excellent and faithful men in this office. For the practical working of our system of public schools, depends in a great degree, for its success, upon the school committees of the several towns. Our school wisely places in their hands great powers; and to wield these powers wisely, requires the best men of every town. In some of the towns no compensation, even for travelling fees, is allowed;



and in none is the compensation such as to be of itself any inducement to undertake the discharge of duties so difficult and laborious. It, therefore, sometimes happens that this office is placed in the hands of irresponsible men. There is, consequently, as great a contrast between the school committees, as there is between school houses and school teachers. While some are using every effort in their power to advance the interests of the schools, others are satisfied to have them remain, at least, as they are. It requires no prophetic gift to show that there will be a corresponding difference in the results. The most important duty which devolves upon the school committee is that of the examination of teachers. Our schools will never meet the demands of the legislature, or fulfill the expectations of the people of the State, until competent teachers are placed in every school. Complaints are not unfrequently made that school committees are unnecessarily severe in the examination of teachers, and that they reject them on trivial and unsatisfactory grounds. So far from these complaints being true, there is reason to believe that very many are allowed to teach who ought to be rejected. This arises from the very nature of the case. It is an extremely disagreeable thing to pronounce a teacher incompetent, and it is a duty from which men are prone to shrink. Besides, it is easy to see that there may be much ill-feeling raised and party spirit excited, by such an act. The original difficulty is sometimes increased by another false step. A teacher commences school without examination and without a certificate. It is then urged that unless a certificate be given, the school will be broken up, so that the teacher is sometimes retained contrary to the better judgment of the committee. This should never be done. No teacher should begin a school till he has been examined and has obtained his certificate of qualification.

The examination of teachers, should be in writing. It can be so conducted in writing as to give teachers a better opportunity of showing what they know, and at the same time a record of the examination can be kept for future reference. Whenever a teacher is rejected for incompetency, school committees would have the evidence of this, and by presenting it, could effectually put all gainsaying to silence. If school committees were sufficiently faithful in conducting examinations, many incompetent persons would be induced to make higher attainments in knowledge before they attempted to teach, and the standard of teaching would be raised.

It is proper, in this connection, to speak of the antagonism which sometimes arises between school committees and school districts. The latter frequently act quite independently of the former. It is not unusual for districts to assume the position that if they are united in respect to their school house or the employment of a particular teacher, school committees ought not to differ from them; that by so doing there is an unnecessary encroachment upon the liberty of the districts; and that all efforts of committees to improve the school or school house, are an impertinent interference with the rights of districts. It is time that such ignorance should be dispelled; that every district should know that the town and the State have a voice in the management of their schools; that such a share in the management is a consequent on town, and especially on State bounty; and that it is the business of a school committee to see that the districts make a wise expenditure of these public funds.

Another important duty which devolves on school committees, is to decide whether the school house is a suitable place, or rather in a suitable condition for the education of children. School committees are the judges in this matter. Districts naturally wish to avoid taxation, either for building a new school house or for repairing an old one. Hence they will be satisfied with a house and think it good enough, or pretend to think it good enough, when no disinterested person would agree with them. If a school committee, under such circumstances, decide that the house must be repaired or a new one built, contrary to the wishes of a district, a storm of indignation is raised against them. It is the duty of the committee to stand firm in every exigency like this, and never, contrary to their judgment, to approve of a house which is unsatisfactory. Yet it is in reference to these two particulars, the approval of teachers, and the approval of school houses, that almost all the complaints arise against school committees. People should be on their guard against listening to these complaints; for it is on the faithful performance of these very duties of school committees, that we are to reap the rewards from the disbursements of the public money.

It is proper to state the points on which districts and school committees are most frequently at issue. The committees are, by law, required to appropriate public money to all districts where schools are kept according to law. The conditions required are that a school must have been kept, at least four months, by a teacher who

has received a certificate of qualification from the school committee, that the house must be approved by the committee, and that returns have been made by the district according to law. If any of these conditions are not fulfilled, the claims of the district to public money are invalid. Many of the conflicts arising from this source, would be avoided, if the towns would build all the school houses, and authorize the school committees to hire as well as examine teachers. The provisions of the school law would require no modification for this purpose. But, as a long time may pass before this measure will be acceptable to the different towns, let the towns select their best men for this office; remunerate them for their time and traveling expenses; and not pass judgment upon their conduct, till after a careful examination of facts. Let such committees be retained in office, and sustained in the full discharge of their duties. Whenever this shall be done, the schools will show by their efficient care and supervision, the blessings to be derived from the bounty and the fostering care of the State.

The topic of school books, is one of considerable importance in its practical bearing on our system of public schools. There is not, however, space enough in this report to consider the subject in all its relations. In some towns, there is a lamentable deficiency of books of every kind, and in other towns there is an equally lamentable deficiency arising from the want of uniformity of books. It is not easy to say whether it is worse for schools to have no books at all, or to have so many different kinds that no two scholars have books of the same kind. Perhaps the latter is the worse evil; because if scholars have no books, it is easy to show that they need them. But if they have books enough, though not of the right kind, it is not so easy to show that others should be procured instead of those which they have. Yet, to place a teacher in the school in either of the above cases, is like a farmer sending a man into his field to hoe corn, either with a hoe without the handle or with a handle without the hoe.

This ought not so to be. Scholars should not only be supplied with books enough, but of the right kind. It may not be easy to have an entire uniformity of school books throughout the State; but there is no great difficulty in effecting such uniformity throughout every town. This subject is entirely in the hands of school committees. They should, therefore, give it particular attention, and bring about this desirable end as speedily as possible. They should be cautious

and not make changes without great care and discrimination; and then they should insist that all changes, in the several districts, be made under their direction and with their entire approbation. School committees, in the selection of books, should act independently and never allow themselves to be swayed by the system of forcing books upon them, now so prevalent in this country.

Some of the remaining difficulties in the practical working of our system of public schools, are self-complacency, or the disposition to be satisfied with what has already been done; the unwillingness of many to be taxed, even for the most necessary school purposes; neighborhood and district quarrels; ignorance; prejudice; party spirit; want of parental coöperation; neglect in visiting schools; unwillingness to have children submit to suitable restraint;—all of which might properly occupy time and space in this report. They are, however, difficulties which may be overcome. Much of this has already been done, and there are many things to inspire the courage and effort required to surmount them. Success already attained; the rapid improvement of school houses, of teachers, and of other instrumentalities; the union of good men of all classes; the willingness of many of the rich to be taxed for schools; the importance of the work; the good to be accomplished and the evil to be shunned by the education of the whole people;—these all combine to awaken zeal and strengthen hope. Difficulties are to be expected in every good work. Instead of disheartening us and paralyzing our exertions, they should rouse us to higher and nobler efforts.

A teachers' Institute was held in Newport, during the first week in October last. As the amount of money appropriated is but three hundred dollars a year, it was thought best to have but one Institute, and concentrate all our power on this one. The result is thought to have justified this decision. More than two hundred teachers of the State were assembled on the occasion. It was, undoubtedly, the largest collection of our own teachers ever assembled in the State, though the teachers of Providence were unable to be present. The members of the Institute were most hospitably entertained by the people of Newport, and long will the teachers remember the untiring zeal of the school committee and other citizens, to make the occasion pleasant as well as profitable.

ble to all who were at the meeting. The instruction and drilling exercises were given by Messrs. Colburn and Goodwin, of the Normal School; Prof. S. S. Greene, of Brown University; and Mr. E. B. Blanchard, of Boston, who was instructor in music. In the absence of Prof. William Russell, who was detained from being present by sickness, F. B. Peckham, Jr. Esq., of Newport gave exercises in reading and recitation, very much to the gratification of the Institute. Evening lectures were given by Rev. Dr. Sears, of Brown University; George W. Curtis, Esq., of New York; Rev. John P. Gulliver, of Norwich, Connecticut; and by the Hon. George S. Boutwell, Secretary of the Board of Education in Massachusetts. The attendance was not only large, but it numbered a considerable portion of the oldest and most experienced teachers of the State. Such a meeting must have left, upon the minds of all who were present, a blessing to be carried to every part of the State. It was peculiarly gratifying, that so many of the citizens of Newport not only attended the evening lectures, but also the lessons of instruction which were given during the day. May they find themselves amply repaid for their kindness and liberality, in the healthful impulse given to their public schools, by this Institute.

The State makes an annual appropriation for "lectures and addresses, to be given in the several school districts, upon the subject of education and the best modes of teaching and improving the schools." In accordance with this provision of the law, lectures and addresses have been given in various places, and it is hoped with beneficial results. Arrangements are also made for such lectures to be given in other places. There is no doubt of the wisdom of this provision; and if the resources of the State would justify it, there would be great advantage in employing some suitable person to spend the whole of his time in passing from town to town and from district to district, in addressing such assemblies as might be gathered together on these occasions. But, as this is plainly one of the duties of the Commissioner of Public Schools, and—from the limited area of the State—a duty which he can, to a good degree, perform, there is reason to believe that a part of the amount appropriated to lectures, can be expended in a way which will render a better service to the cause of education.

That every State needs some periodical devoted to education, especially to common schools, is a fact too well established to

need discussion. Its necessity has been so apparent to all my predecessors, that they have made considerable sacrifices, in time and money, in order to sustain a work of this kind. Yet, with these sacrifices, they were not able to sustain such a periodical by its mere circulation. The same is found to be true of similar periodicals in other states. New York appropriates \$1000 annually for the support of the "New York Teacher." Connecticut appropriates \$250 for two hundred copies of the "Common School Journal." Massachusetts appropriates \$300 a year, for the support of the "Massachusetts Teacher." Pennsylvania grants \$1700 annually for the support of the "Pennsylvania School Journal." Ohio sends a copy of its Journal to each School Board; Wisconsin, to every school district. Upper Canada appropriates \$1800 and Lower Canada \$2000 annually to the support of their respective journals of education. At the time of my accession to the office of Commissioner of Public Schools, the "Rhode Island Schoolmaster" had been transferred to the hands of an individual, whose education, tastes, and deep interest in the cause of education, all fit him to preside over such a Journal. It was a great relief to know that the responsibility of sustaining this journal did not rest on me. Yet I was not insensible to the value of such a publication in aiding the very cause which it was my duty to advance. It is with regret, therefore, I learn that the present circulation of the "Schoolmaster" will not sustain it, and that without aid it must be discontinued. Under these circumstances, I deem it my duty to recommend that the provision of the law in regard to lectures and addresses, be so far modified that a part of the appropriation may be expended for copies of the "Schoolmaster," to be distributed throughout the State. The modification may be so made as to leave the arrangement to the discretion of the Committee on Education, or the Commissioner of Public Schools; or it may be made specifically by the General Assembly. There are about 350 rural districts in the State, where the advantages for information are much smaller than in the large towns and cities. Three hundred dollars would send a copy of the "Schoolmaster" into every one of these districts; and perhaps in no other way, could that sum of money be better appropriated to the cause of popular education.

Extracts from the reports of the Committees of the several cities and towns will now be presented. As these reports cannot be given in full, without swelling my report to an undue length, only such parts will be selected from any of them as are thought to be of some special interest. It will be no part of my object, in this connection, to mete out censure or praise; for to do this wisely, requires a much more thorough knowledge of the practical working of our school system, than it has yet been my privilege to gain. Besides, direct praise, where praise is deserved, is not always good in its subsequent influence; and censure, even when it is deserved, is not always the best mode of stimulating men to make improvement.

No reports have been received from Johnston, Newport, Portsmouth, Middletown, New Shoreham, Jamestown, Charlestown, West Greenwich; and only reports in manuscript from Foster, Little Compton, North Kingstown, Coventy and Barrington.

#### PROVIDENCE.

During the interval between the winter and summer schools of the rural districts, I visited all the schools in the city of Providence. Afterwards I made short visits to Boston and New York, for the purpose of making myself better acquainted with the schools of those cities. The result of these visits was such as to give me increased confidence in the system now established, and which has so long been in successful operation in this city. The changes which have been recently made in the classification and gradation of the schools, will add greatly to their efficiency and success. The friends of public schools in all parts of the State, especially in the villages and larger towns, in attempting to improve their schools, will do well to give the schools of Providence a careful examination before they proceed far in their attempted improvement. With these brief remarks, I will now introduce two extracts from the last annual report; one from the report of the school committee on evening schools, the other from that of the Superintendent, on the new mode of arranging and grading the day schools.

- “The evening schools, as one of the most interesting and important parts of our system of public instruction, have received much attention from the committee.

" During the past winter, eight schools, being the number allowed by the city ordinance, were established in different portions of the city. The schools continued for fifteen weeks, and afforded instruction to above fifteen hundred pupils, of all ages from eight to forty years.

" The entire cost of tuition in these schools was a little less than twenty-five hundred dollars, making the average cost per scholar, for tuition, about \$1 65, for a term of fifteen weeks.

" The good that has been accomplished by these schools, for a class in the community whose circumstances compel their absence from the day schools, is incalculable. Particularly has this been the case during the past winter, when the general prostration of business, and the want of employment, has suggested to those who really desired to be honest, other than honorable means of gaining a livelihood.

" The elements of an education have thus been acquired by those, some of whom, if left in idleness, would have become the inmates of our reform school.

" The committee were much gratified, in visiting these schools, to observe the earnestness with which men, women and children were striving to lay the foundations of a common education. The committee would therefore present this part of our system of public education to your honorable body, as one of the most important means of improving that portion of our community beyond the reach of other means of public instruction. For every dollar expended upon our evening schools, a tenfold return will be received in the improved moral and intellectual character of our city.

" For the Committee,

CHARLES H. PARKHURST,  
JAMES R. STONE."

" From the examination of the different grammar schools, there is indubitable evidence that the alterations that have been made in two of the grammar school buildings, have very materially increased the value and the efficiency of these schools. All the benefits and advantages that were expected when these changes were proposed, have been fully realized. The principals of these schools, who have taught under both systems, are very decided in the expression of their opinion in regard to the superior facilities which these schools afford, when compared with those under the old system; and their experience is in perfect accordance with that of hundreds of other able teachers, who have made a similar trial. I have never known a teacher, who has had a good opportunity of judging of both systems, who has not given his decided preference to the one recently introduced into our schools. During the last few years, this subject has been so thoroughly and ably discussed by the devoted friends of education, that it has now become an established principle in the grading and arranging of schools, that pupils can be far better



taught, and better governed, in rooms containing from fifty to sixty scholars, than they can be in rooms of one hundred and fifty and two hundred scholars. As this subject was discussed somewhat at length in a former report, it may not be worth while to say more upon it at present. The economical feature of the new arrangement, however, demands a few words in explanation. It will be perceived that I designate the arrangement of the schools in the buildings that have not been altered, the old system; and in the improved buildings, the new system. By a fair comparison of the two, we can best judge which is the most economical.

"By the recent returns from the Prospect street and the Arnold street grammar schools, which are under the old system, it appears that there are 392 pupils in both of these schools. And this is about the average number for the year. The cost of instruction alone, in these schools, is \$4,500 a year,—\$2,400 being paid to two principals, and \$2,100 to six assistants. The number of pupils in the Elm street grammar school, which has been altered and placed under the new system, is 388, while the cost of instruction alone, in this school, is at the rate only of \$3,300, which is \$1,200 less than is paid for the instruction of but four more scholars in Prospect and Arnold street grammar schools. Here is a gain of \$1,200 a year in the cost of instruction, while the expense of the change was but \$1,250. Some deduction, however, should be made from this amount, in consideration of the fact that the Elm street grammar school is now in a crowded state, and has more pupils than were contemplated by the change. This reduction will make the actual gain to be less than \$1000 a year. There has been a similar gain in the cost of instruction in the Benefit street grammar school, which is under the same system. There is another fact that should be taken into the account in this comparison, which is this: These two buildings are now devoted entirely to grammar school instruction, and the primary and intermediate pupils that were formerly in them, have been furnished with accommodations elsewhere. By this arrangement, we have secured additional accommodations, in both buildings, for more than 300 grammar school scholars. And as it costs, at least, two dollars more a scholar for grammar school accommodation, than it does for schools of a lower grade, there has been, in this respect, a gain to the city of more than \$600. So that the whole amount saved in one year, by the alterations, is not less than \$2,600, which is more than the whole expense incurred. This comparison I believe to be perfectly just, and fully warranted by the facts in my possession. Had not these improvements been made, there would have been, at this time, in wards one and five, three hundred children, in every way qualified, both by age and attainment, that could not be admitted into the grammar schools in these wards. And I know of no other way in which these children could be provided for; but by the erection of one or two new school houses.

"It has been urged by some, as an objection to the new system, that the

Elm street and Benefit street schools have been excessively crowded, and that the assistants have had a very laborious task to perform. This is unquestionably true, and it is to be deeply regretted. The assistants in these schools are deserving of all praise, for their faithful perseverance in their arduous work. But the crowded state of the schools is not, by any means, to be ascribed to any change of the system, but was rather in consequence of the suspension of business, by which more than two hundred children were thrown out of employment, and sought admission into our schools. What was to be done with these applicants? Were the doors of our schools to be closed against them? Certainly not. The only thing that could be done for the time, was to receive as many into school as possible, notwithstanding an additional burden would be imposed on some of the teachers. As many of these children have now found new employment, or left the city, these schools will be very much relieved at the beginning of the next term.

"It is but just to add, that as a higher order of talent, and a larger experience are requisite in assistants, under the new system, than under the old, and as their labor and responsibility are much greater than that of assistants in the other grammar schools, they in justice should receive a larger compensation.

D. LEACH, Superintendent."

#### NORTH PROVIDENCE.

From the report of the Committee of this town, we quote the following :

##### "WORD TO PARENTS.

"A school committee's report would not be perfect if it did not contain a few words of plain talk to the parents of those children who are being educated at our public schools.

"Any one would suppose that some of our district schools were orphan asylums, as he could form no idea, from the 'list of visitors,' that any of the children possessed those usual appendages to childhood, called father and mother.

"Were it not that an 'examination day' called them out, the teacher would oftentimes remain in ignorance of their existence.

"It is said that parents have no time to attend to such unimportant matters, as the education of their children ; that the care of providing for, and looking after, their household, 'takes all their time.' Will any amount of material wealth, that a parent can bestow upon his child, prove so great a blessing to him as a virtuous heart, and an intelligent mind ?

"Can time be better employed than in educating the moral and intellectual nature of a young being ?

"We only ask every parent to answer these questions conscientiously, and we cannot doubt that the heart of the teacher will be often gladdened by their presence, sympathy and co-operation.

EDWARD J. CUSHING, Chairman."

#### SMITHFIELD.

The following abstract will show how much may be done, to advance the cause of public schools, by manufacturing corporations, when directed by wise, intelligent and liberal minded men :

"District No. 32 has been highly favored. During the year past, the Lonsdale Company have, with generous liberality, erected a large and beautiful school house, and furnished it with the latest improvements in desks, chairs, apparatus, &c. The house, at present, affords six rooms for the use of the schools. The primary and intermediate apartments on the first floor, will each seat a hundred pupils ; and with each apartment is connected a large recitation room. The room used by the high school, on the second floor, will accommodate from forty to fifty scholars. There is, also, on the same floor, a beautiful hall 48 by 46, designed for the use of the high school whenever it shall be needed. The basement has been divided into two apartments, well lighted and furnished, with cemented floors, washed walls, &c., for play-rooms for the children in wet weather ; while, around, are ample grounds, neatly enclosed, with out-buildings — everything being constructed with a view to the convenience, comfort and healthful growth of the children. The house is of brick, and every part is finished in the most substantial and workman-like manner ; and it is worthy of note, that the entire cost of the building, furniture, grading, fences, bell, &c., &c., was but \$6,924 70. That so neat, commodious and substantial a building can be erected at so comparatively small a cost, should encourage others to imitate their example. The Lonsdale Company deserve well of the friends of education, for this token of their public spirit and good taste ; and we trust they will feel amply repaid in the good influences already going out from those walls consecrated to sound learning. It is but justice to add, that it is the earnest desire of the teachers and trustees, to give the schools a corresponding character."

On the subject of teachers, and licensing them to teach, we quote the following just and judicious remarks :

"The committee may here allude to a most difficult and delicate part of the duty assigned them, viz. : the licensing persons to teach. In this they have aimed to please no one, but to do their duty ; nor are they sure that, in all cases, they have succeeded. In insisting on the minimum rather than the maximum, the lowest rather than the highest qualifications which might rea-

sonably be expected, they may have erred on the side of leniency ; for, as water does not rise above its level, so our schools are not likely to rise above the standard which is constantly placed before them in their teacher.

"The appropriations of the town and State are liberal, and there is no good reason why our schools should not be fully equal to the best in our country. True, it is a work of time and labor ; but it is possible and desirable ; and, with proper effort, certain.

"For this, too great pains cannot be taken in the selection of teachers ; and, when once selected, *they should be sustained*.

"In adopting, as they have, to a considerable extent, written as well as oral examinations, requiring the candidate to write both question and answer, the committee feel confident that in every case of rejection, the written result will vindicate the course they have adopted and the conclusion at which they have arrived.

"Sound scholarship has nothing to fear from thorough tests, and defective nothing to hope.

"But more than a knowledge of books is necessary. There should be a knowledge of *subjects* ; and, with all, *aptness* to teach.

"The *art of teaching* is more difficult and important than most suppose.

"Men do not presume to practice law or medicine without previous study and drill, in the particular profession in which they propose to engage ; and why should they presume to teach, before studying the art of teaching ?

"To meet this great and crying want, is the liberal design of the State Normal School ; and we cannot too earnestly commend it to the attention of all interested in the great and good work of a thorough, practical education. There, under kind and experienced teachers, may be learned that most difficult art, *the art of teaching*, as well as the *subjects* to be taught.

F. J. WARNER, Clerk."

#### CUMBERLAND.

From the report of the Visiting and Examining Committee, the following quotations will commend themselves to all reflecting minds :

"The districts ought more generally to furnish the schools with outline maps, and with books of reference. There should be, at least, a good defining dictionary upon every teacher's desk. Perhaps if the desks were also supplied with the prescribed text-books, with which many of the teachers do not feel able to supply themselves, upon every removal from one town to another, a double service would be rendered, in breaking up the habit of borrowing from the scholar just when he needs his own, and in enabling the teacher to become familiar with the subject of each day's lesson, by a little previous study,—a work, I am sorry to say, too much neglected.

"The trustees of the various districts have, in most cases, co-operated with the committee, in promoting the welfare of the schools. To them I would return my thanks, asking the favor that they will request candidates for teachers to present themselves for an early examination, and that *they* will fill up and forward to the sub-committee the blank returns, immediately at the close of each term.

**"IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE.**

"The difference between the numbers of those registered in our various schools, and of those in constant attendance, is suggestive of serious thought to those interested in the behalf of our school education. And, notwithstanding the desire has existed, and the effort has been made, to adopt some regulation by which a full attendance of those 'due at the schools' could be secured, no efficient plan has yet been tried. There is no difficulty in suggesting means to promote this end, but there is a difficulty in adopting them. Legislation upon this subject is uncommon, and the idea of such a proceeding causes the people to throw up their hands in horror, and cry out that their rights are being invaded.

"Every man, who pays a tax of a dollar, has rights that are to be respected; but the State, which pays a tax of fifty thousand dollars for the purposes of education, has no rights, and can, therefore, have no voice in saying how its bounties shall be bestowed and used!

"All the institutions of the State are managed in accordance with certain regulations, deemed healthy; and the rights of the people in reference thereto are defined and restricted.

"The public schools of our State are established and regulated by law, and the people prove themselves inconsistent when they yield a willing obedience to rules and requirements which look to a common good in other matters, but protest against enactments for the better and more universal diffusion of knowledge.

"Whether legislation upon this subject is *advisable*, I do not discuss; but the necessity of discovering some remedy for this evil of irregular attendance, I maintain. The habit formed by the scholar, will be confirmed in the man; the ill effects of which will be observed in all the business and social relations of the individual. Beside, every absence from the school incurs a direct loss to the absentee, since no pupil can learn as much by attending school four days in the week as he can in five days. To be sure, each scholar, or parent of a scholar, can claim the right to incur what individual loss he pleases. This argument has been advanced to me, with the additional one, that absences are a benefit to the school, for the reason that a school of forty scholars will make more rapid progress than one of sixty pupils. True, perhaps, if the numbers are constant, but not true where the average attendance of sixty registered scholars is reduced to forty, by the irregular attend-

ance of the whole number. Allow ten scholars to be out of school for a day, and you will find them deficient in their double task of the next day. In order to bring them up in their lessons with the other members of the class, the time of the teacher must be taken from the class, to whom it belongs, and given to the delinquents, to whom it does not belong. By the time these ten pupils are on an equal footing with their classmates, whom they have pulled back, another ten are absent, and consequently another curb is placed upon the class; and so it goes on to the end of the term, when the school is found deficient in the amount of progress it should have made. This, certainly, cannot be a benefit to the school, and is my answer to the argument in favor of absences.

“The loss incurred by each scholar is not, in truth, an individual loss, since in this way every absence of a pupil deprives all the members of the school of that which is rightfully their own — time and money.

“Another light in which this subject may be viewed, is a pecuniary one. Certainly the appropriations of the State and town are not charities, to be used or abused, as the case may be, but they are sums expended, for which an equivalent is expected. It is tacitly understood that these moneys shall be expended for the ‘greatest good of the greatest number,’ and for the ultimate benefit of the State and town.

“Now, how is this accomplished? Are our regulations such that this money is expended for the ‘greatest good of the greatest number?’ Is there really any loss to the town and State? The following will perhaps furnish an answer to these questions:

No. of scholars 'due at schools.'	No. of scholars registered.	Average attendance.	Cost of educating each reg. scholar.	Cost of each of ave- rage attendance.
1543	1328	909	\$3 61	\$5 28

“About one-third, or thirty-three per cent. of the scholars registered, and nearly forty-two per cent. of those ‘due at the schools,’ are permanently absent. Two hundred of the children fail to receive any of the benefits to which they are entitled, and about one-third of those who put in their claims, are deprived of their legitimate share by their own carelessness, or the inconsiderateness of their parents. The cost of educating each scholar is made nearly fifty per cent. higher than it should be; or in other words, thirty-three per cent. of the money is so expended as to fail in securing the end desired.

GEORGE W. JENCKES, M. D.,  
Visiting and Examining Committee.”

## SITUATE.

From the report of the Committee of this town, we quote the following remarks, on

“PARENTAL CO-OPERATION AND VISITATION OF SCHOOLS.

“We cannot forbear expressing our sincere regret, that parents are so much inclined to leave the whole business of visiting the places where their children are undergoing such important discipline, to the committee alone.

“Whenever they are invited and urged to take an interest in the examination of a district school, they will excuse themselves by saying, ‘we are not competent; we have no time;’ and by many such frivolous excuses.

“In order, therefore, to remedy this evil of indifference, parents must awake and do *their duty*; they must take an interest, a deep interest, in our schools; they must go into the school-room, and in this way demonstrate to their children that they *have an interest there*, and while in the school-room they will have an opportunity of witnessing the teacher’s laborious task, his cares and his trials. (*The teacher does have trials.*)

“Such visits will have a salutary effect on the minds of the scholars, and constrain them to exercise none other than kind and friendly feelings towards the teacher; and thus, by their presence, they will encourage the hearts, and strengthen the hands of both scholars and teacher. ‘Union is strength.’

“Parents *must* all be united in the common cause of education; they must all pull together in the same direction; for whenever we find discord and disagreement among parents and families, there we see it growing into a party thing; so it can be readily seen that, after all the teacher’s efforts to have a good school, parents have the power to do and undo for him, to sustain or prostrate all his plans for good discipline and successful teaching, and too often is it the case, that a parent’s influence is thus unhappily perverted. A few words of complaint against the teacher in the children’s hearing, a single expression of willingness to ‘take the part’ of a pupil, should any difficulty arise, often give serious inconvenience to the instructor, and may very likely create the necessity for severity which otherwise would not be called for. Your committee are fully persuaded that any attempt on the part of parents, under ordinary circumstances, to contravene the authority of the teacher, is ill judged, and ought not to be countenanced by the patriotic citizen; and whenever by such interference his authority is diminished, or his usefulness is impaired, while he sustains an injury, the community sustains a greater one than he, one which it may be found very difficult to repair. On the other hand, let all parents lend their cheerful aid to the instructors of their children, encourage their well-meant endeavors to be useful either in instruction or discipline, and show that they take delight in their work and its results. Take a firm stand on the side of good order; preach, every-

where, *and especially at home*, the doctrine of thorough discipline ; and above all *exemplify* such doctrines in their own practice ; and while they will seldom have occasion to complain of broken heads or purple stripes, they may have the satisfaction of knowing that our school houses are, as they ever should be, the quiet nurture rooms of those things only, which 'are holy and of good report.'

WILLIAM S. KENT, Chairman."

#### GLOCESTER.

The following remarks, on the moral qualification of teachers, taken from the report of the Committee of this town, are commended to the careful consideration of all who hire or examine teachers :

##### "MORAL QUALIFICATION.

"A teacher should be a person of good manners and a spotless character. If this is required of any man, it certainly should be of a teacher of youth. His character, so conspicuous and so influential, should be a *model* one. He stands at the fountain of influence in the youthful mind ; and if he has a *good* character, a high moral tone and influence will be felt in all the interests of that community ; but if he is *low* in his tastes and moral habits, he puts a *deadly poison* into that fountain of mind, which runs down all the streams of society, polluting and destroying as it goes. A teacher may have great talent and ability to instruct, but if he is low and corrupt in his morals, that talent only gives him increased power to pollute the too wayward imaginations and propensities of youth. To them, gilded vice is fascinating, and for this reason should be shunned. The law of the State demands 'good moral character,' in those who shall be employed at its expense.

"Article 12, of the constitution of the State, speaks of two things as essential to the preservation of the 'rights and liberties' of the State, viz. : '*knowledge and virtue* ;' and virtue, in all languages, is defined to be the practice of moral duties and abstaining from moral vices. The Massachusetts law defines what it means by this, in its speaking of the duty of teachers : 'To impress on the minds of the youth, the principles of piety, justice and a sacred regard to *truth*, love to their country, *benevolence*, *chastity*, *temperance*, and those other virtues which are the ornament of society ;' and also, 'to point out to them the evil of the opposite vices ;' that is, the *vileness* of profane language and obscene song, the *meanness* of deception and falsehood, and the *debasement* of intemperate and vicious habits. By precept, and much more by *example*, the teacher should impress upon them these virtues, and warn them of the opposite vices ; without this, the educated mind will only be a power for evil and ruin to the State. While *vile men* are clamoring for



teachers who will represent their own vices, the *State*, in order to its own self-preservation, demands that its *school money* shall be expended for the promotion of knowledge and *virtue*, and the suppression of ignorance and vice; hence its requirement for teachers of 'good moral character,' that its highest interests may be promoted and not destroyed. Our schools then must be made radiant with *virtuous and moral influences*, and free from that profane and demoralizing talk and influence which now disgraces some of our schools, especially in time of recess, and which ought to be banished from it at once and forever."

Also, on refusing certificates, the report says:

"The committee have felt that they must insist on a higher qualification in the teachers, in order to elevate the schools of the town; and in pursuance of this it has been their painful duty to refuse certificates of qualification to four persons; three of these were very deficient in the knowledge of the simple elements of study and the power of illustrating them, and thus gave to us evidence that they would do the school little or no good. If persons will not study and thoroughly prepare themselves for the work of teaching, why should the State employ them, to be drones in the school room, and waste its *money* and its *mind*? Though they may have taught before, in other places, and have been to high schools, and even to the Normal school, yet if they do not show themselves familiar with these studies *now*, as much so as some of the scholars in nearly all the schools, they are not qualified to teach in this town.

"The teacher of the grammar school department of the Associated district, was refused a certificate on the ground of *moral character*. The third section of the law says: 'The school committee shall not sign any certificate of qualification unless the person named in the same shall produce evidence of good moral character.' The committee have failed to obtain this evidence which the law requires, not only in this place, but in other places where he has taught, and there is forced upon them the evidence of an entire want of it. The committee felt, therefore, that they could not renew his certificate without violating their oath of office, as well as doing a great injury to the schools. Indeed, the late Commissioner, when hearing of such conduct in one who sustains the high office of a teacher, advised the annulling of his certificate. They did not annul it, but at the end of the year they refused to renew it; but the majority of the trustees, contrary to the law, hired him again, and he consented to remain, in spite of the authority of the State. He thus trampled the law under foot, and showed himself still farther unfit for his office of instructor, in teaching, by example, disobedience to the law of the State. On page 13, of the Annual Report of 1856, it says of such a teacher: 'This practice cannot be too severely condemned; and the person so attempting to set at naught the lawful authority of the guardians of the

interest and morality of the schools of a town, certainly proves himself unworthy of the office of an instructor of youth. He is creeping into an office of the greatest dignity and sacredness, by a species of low trickery ; and teaching, by example, ere he begins his duties of exacting obedience to rules, that it is allowable and trustworthy to evade any rule or law that stands between himself and the object of his desire.'

ORIN F. OTIS,  
THOMAS IRONS,  
JOB OWEN."

#### BURRILLVILLE.

From the Committee's report, we quote the following, as a source of encouragement :

"By referring to the table given in the first part of this report, and comparing it with a similar one in the report of last year, some very encouraging results will be noticed. Instead of an aggregate of 700 scholars in our schools then, this table now shows 815 ; and instead of an average of 423 for the former year, we have 580 for the school year just closed. These figures not only show an increased aggregate and average, but indicate a better ratio between the aggregate and average for the latter than for the former year. They are of vital import and significance, and ought to stimulate the friends of education to lend their aid in still increasing these numbers, and providing still more liberally for the benefit of those now fitting themselves for the active duties of life. No investments are safer, none pay a higher per centage than those made in this direction. In this way much may yet be done, by a judicious expenditure of appropriations, by improvement in our school houses and their surroundings, and by a manifestly increased interest on the part of parents and guardians. Let them visit and examine the schools with as much interest, promptness and punctuality as they would any operations carried on at their expense.

"Reference to our notice of the individual districts will also show that an unusual number of teachers have been re-employed. This is the true policy. So long as teachers are successful, let their services be secured, if possible.

SAMUEL O. GRIFFIN,	} School Committee."
OLIVER A. INMAN,	
ISAAC STEERE,	

#### TIVERTON.

From the report of the Committee of Tiverton, the following paragraph will harmonize with the maxim, "that we are never too old to learn."

"The committee have been pleased to see, during the past winter, in some

of our schools, men older than themselves, attending as pupils. We believe it to be a good idea, for men who have no other business, to attend school, and by their influence and example, thus aid the cause of education, while improving their own minds. Many young persons leave school at the time they might be most benefited by attending.

JOHN T. COOK,  
ISAAC C. MANCHESTER,  
ISAAC D. MANCHESTER, } Committee."

#### FALL RIVER.

The Committee, in the following paragraph, touch gently upon a difficulty which appertains to the school systems of this and the neighboring States :

"It is submitted to the electors, whether a change in the management of the public schools is not really needed. So long as the 'district' system prevails, so long must the rapid improvement of schools be retarded. The present system may be greatly improved, and yet each district retain its individual interest in property. The employment of teachers might be devolved upon the committee ; and they might also be instructed to grade the schools, with reference to the qualifications of scholars, and thereby save some expense.

ELIHU GRANT,  
F. A. BOOMER,  
WM. CONNELL, JR., } Committee."

#### SOUTH KINGSTOWN.

Among the several references to the Normal School, we present the following, from the report of this town :

"Great care should be taken by the trustees to procure good teachers those who intend to make teaching their entire business, as it has been made too much a transient occupation ; and we advise all such persons to avail themselves of the benefits of the Normal School, which is calculated expressly to complete them in the studies necessary for them to understand, and to discipline them in the best modes of government.

I. M. CHURCH, Chairman."

#### WESTERLY.

The following paragraph, from the Superintendent's report, refers to an evil which is not confined to this town. It is to be hoped that all school committees will set themselves "vigorously" to its correction.

"The great fault in our schools generally, has been found to be in the large

number of classes requiring the particular care of the teachers. For this cause, the teachers are able to allow only a few minutes' attention to each class, at the time of recitation. In most of the schools, the recitations, including the scholars learning the letters and syllabification and writing, average from thirty to forty, at least, per diem, and this equally in the schools which number the fewest and those which number the most scholars.

"This great fault has proceeded, in part, from the extensive variety of text-books which have been introduced into the schools, by teachers, (who, having studied particular books, are partial to the same,) contrary to the law, and without observation, or at least without remonstrance, on the part of trustees and visitors. The committee have taken hold of this evil vigorously, and have endeavored to rid the schools of these unlawful text-books, and to require the teachers to use only such books as are authorized by the rules of the committee.

THOMAS H. VAIL, Superintendent."

#### NORTH KINGSTOWN.

The subject of uniformity in text-books is spoken of in the following manner, in the report of the Committee:

"Much advantage has resulted already from adopting a uniformity of text-books, whereby the schools have been better classified, and a more marked and thorough improvement is apparent, than in the faulty classification, consequent upon the variety of text-books used during the past few years; and we believe greater good will result, by strictly adhering to such regulations in future.

A. M. THOMAS, Chairman,  
NICHOLAS N. SPINK, Secretary."

#### HOPKINTON.

From the report of the Committee we quote the following, upon important points:

"Whenever practical, we think there is much gained by keeping up the same system of discipline, under the same teacher, throughout the year. But we find that, in most instances, this has not been the case the past year, and, consequently, the advancement has not been as much as otherwise; for until a new teacher can learn the actual condition of his school, and the scholars learn him, the progress of his school is retarded, and the actual loss is more than is usually imagined.

"Upon the examination of our registers, we observe an increased average daily attendance; and also the number of visits from parents, teachers and

others; and those schools that have been thus most favored, have made the greatest progress in their studies. The benefits arising from visiting schools, to the pupils, is far more than is often supposed, even by parents themselves. It gives encouragement to the teacher and pupils, and incites them to a spirit of emulation. They double their diligence, to make their school more and more interesting, at each succeeding visit.

"The necessity of a uniformity of text-books in our schools, is without question; and we regret to have to refer to the innovation several of the districts have made, upon the school regulation relating thereto. It is much easier to encourage and introduce new text-books into the schools, through the recommendation of the teachers or others, than to bring about a uniformity after the system is once broken up. The committee labored for years, to complete the system, and no teacher should encourage the introduction of any text-book, without the approbation of the school committee.

"The large districts, we believe, would receive great profits for the outlay, if they would employ assistant teachers. It cannot be expected that a teacher can give that thorough instruction to his pupils, that may be supposed he ought to, when we place him in a room of seventy scholars, with twenty recitations, to be heard in six hours. It is enough to drive an intelligent teacher wild, thus to be placed. How much better it would be to have an assistant, that each scholar may have that attention which we expect, when we send our children to school. We hope that this subject will receive the attention of those districts.

N. K. LEWIS, }  
G. H. OLNEY, } Committee."  
O. B. IRISH, }

#### WARWICK.

From the Superintendent's report, we take the following remarks, on "order:"

"In most of your schools order has been maintained. Some few teachers know how to govern a school, without preparation. With others it is not so. The knowledge of school government is, in general, as necessary a study as literary qualifications. Normal instruction ought to be secured by every one who would be a good teacher. This preparation is sadly neglected.

"All the failures in the order of a school do not fall exclusively on the teacher. 'Troubles in districts' have a bad influence in the schools, where they exist. The members of the districts talk unwisely about the difficulties before their children. These are not slow to become the partisans of their friends. The spirit excited is carried into school. Two or three cases of this description have existed in your schools within a few months.

"Parents are not always judicious. They think, of course, that their own

children are faultless; that they will not lie, will not deceive, will not misrepresent. The teacher finds it necessary to correct one of this stamp. The scholar carries his story home. The parent believes it. He consults not the teacher. The child is supported at home. The evil is augmented. Both the school and scholar are injured. When this state of things exists, no school can prosper. If parents would see the teacher, and inquire into the facts, it is probable, that, in most cases, the parents would approve of the teacher's course.

B. PHELON, Superintendent."

#### COVENTRY.

The following extract, from the report of the Committee, presents their opinion of the value of the common school:

"Comparatively few can avail themselves of the high school, academy or college. Hence the necessity of the well taught, properly disciplined common school, at which all can acquire a thorough primary education. We would, therefore, suggest that great care be taken in the selection of teachers, that none be employed except such as are competent, intellectually and morally, to guide and develop the minds of their pupils.

JOSEPH TILLINGHAST,  
HENRY S. VAUGHN,  
BENJAMIN V. GALLUP, } Committee."

#### BRISTOL.

From the Committee's report we take the following extract:

"On the whole, in the review of the general condition of the schools, during the past year, the committee are happy in being able to say, that there has been very little to disturb their harmony and quiet progress, either in discipline or instruction. The town have been commendably generous in their appropriations; the committee have endeavored to make a wise and impartial distribution of the funds committed to their trust; and it is believed that each district has been satisfied with the apportionment. These twelve separate schools, located in the different neighborhoods, fitted to the wants of the different ages and attainments of children, governed and taught by qualified instructors, and passing under the monthly supervision of the committee, cannot but exert a constant and powerful, though noiseless influence, upon the minds and the morals of the rising generation. They are, and should be so considered by every one, the brightest ornament connected with our municipal institutions. They are permanent blessings. Like the tree of life planted upon the banks of the river of life, they yield their fruit every month, and the leaves thereof are for the healing of the nation. Our

schools do not alternate with the lights and shadows of an ever fluctuating commerce. During these days of financial embarrassment and distress, the families of the rich and the poor, the native and the foreigner, fall back upon them as the most profitable resort for their children when the avenues to labor and business are closed up. Need we offer to our fellow citizens any further inducements to cherish and sustain these most precious bequests of the founders of our republic, these pillars of American freedom, though the public resources are straitened? Which of these schools can you spare, that it may be disbanded? They are now filled, and some of them are overflowing. Nay, will there not be a demand upon your committee of next year, to provide enlarged accommodations, for the increasing numbers knocking at the school room door, rather than to curtail them? We submit the whole subject of the future prosperity of our public schools, to the wise consideration of the freemen of the town, who well know their worth, with the fullest confidence, that the same liberal and enlightened policy will be pursued in the future that has characterized their doings in the past.

THOMAS SHEPARD, Chairman,  
JONATHAN D. WALDRON, Secretary."

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In the tables of statistics, which are subjoined, an approximation to exactness is all that is claimed. Till more attention is given to the returns, which should be made from the districts to school committees, and from the school committees to the Commissioner, these tables cannot secure an accuracy which is perfectly reliable. It is but just to say, that the blanks which are furnished to school committees, are adapted only to rural districts, where summer and winter schools prevail, and not to those schools which continue throughout the year. In making up the tables, in this latter case, the same numbers have been inserted for both summer and winter.

By referring to the Financial Table, it will be seen that the amount of tax voted for the next year is less, by \$14,391 44, than it was last year. This difference is owing to the diminished sums voted by Providence, Newport, Portsmouth and Tiverton; while Glocester, Exeter, Charlestown, Hopkinton, West Greenwich and Warren have increased their appropriations. By referring to the Tables of School Statistics, it will be seen that there has been a large increase of scholars in attendance upon the schools. This

was owing to the financial troubles of the country, by which so many persons in our manufacturing districts were thrown out of employment. It is to be regarded as a favorable circumstance, that so many of these young persons and children were induced to improve the opportunity thus offered, to attend school.

### S U M M A R Y .

Amount appropriated from the General Treasury to the several towns.....	\$49,996 88
Amount raised by town taxes.....	107,021 18
Amount received from registry taxes.....	10,162 95
Amount received from rate bills.....	5,250 95
Balances from last year.....	23,080 84
<hr/>	
Total resources.....	\$195,512 74
Last year.....	172,414 69
Increase.....	23,098 05
Amount expended on school houses.....	43,085 16
Last year.....	32,517 75
Increase over last year.....	10,567 41
Amount voted next year.....	91,272 89
Last year.....	105,664 33
Decrease.....	14,391 44
The number of scholars taught in summer schools.....	25,682
Reported last year.....	22,046
Increase.....	3,636
Average attendance.....	19,240
Last year.....	16,467
Increase.....	2,773
Number of scholars in winter schools.....	29,081
Last year.....	26,480
Increase.....	2,601
Average attendance.....	21,506
Last year.....	18,766
Increase.....	2,740

Respectfully submitted:

JOHN KINGSBURY,

Commissioner of Public Schools.

OFFICE OF COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS, }  
 Providence, January, 1859. }



TABLE I.—FINANCIAL STATISTICS.

NAMES OF TOWNS.										
	Amount received from the General Treasury.	Amount of Town Tax.	Registry Tax and other sources.	Rate Bills.	Balance unexpended.	Total—from all sources.	Actually expended, exclusive of School Houses.	Expended on School Houses.	Amount of Tax next year.	Total appropriation from the General Treasury next year.
PROVIDENCE COUNTY.										
Providence .....	\$10,609 83	\$65,000 00	\$1,747 05	.....	\$19,024 49	\$90,381 37	\$52,000 00	\$36,000 00	\$50,000 00	\$10,609 83
North Providence.....	2,246 10	4,500 00	397 00	.....	.....	7,143 10	.....	.....	4,500 00	2,246 10
Smithfield .....	4,119 20	4,500 00	380 00	.....	.....	8,999 20	.....	.....	4,500 00	4,119 20
Cumberland.....	2,356 07	2,000 00	2,841 33	.....	41 18	7,241 58	7,241 58	6,851 86	2,000 00	2,356 07
Scituate .....	1,765 08	900 00	182 25	272 97	.....	3,120 30	2,695 87	.....	900 00	1,765 08
Cranston .....	1,543 42	3,500 00	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	3,500 00	1,543 42
Johnston .....	1,257 69	500 00	352 11	.....	154 01	2,363 81	2,206 42	.....	500 00	1,257 69
Gloicester .....	1,206 70	200 00	272 70	.....	49 62	1,729 02	.....	.....	312 00	1,206 70
Foster .....	1,174 83	237 68	166 57	264 94	389 50	2,233 52	1,534 09	737 00	237 68	1,174 83
Burrillville.....	1,487 62	800 00	182 54	.....	192 45	2,662 61	.....	.....	1,800 00	1,487 62
Totals .....	\$27,766 63	\$82,137 68	\$6,594 55	\$537 91	\$19,851 25	\$131,774 50	\$65,677 96	\$43,588 86	\$57,240 68	\$27,766 63
NEWPORT COUNTY.										
Newport .....	\$2,355 39	\$9,000 00	\$374 50	\$706 74	\$257 49	\$12,684 12	\$11,830 28	\$862 84	\$8,000 00	\$2,355 39
Portsmouth.....	721 04	390 00	92 05	735 10	52 07	1,961 26	.....	.....	300 00	721 04
Middletown.....	383 71	200 00	34 83	32 00	17 60	668 14	.....	.....	200 00	383 71
Tiverton .....	1,013 19	1,000 00	49 70	.....	153 87	2,216 76	.....	.....	750 00	1,013 19
Fall River .....	968 73	2,500 00	41 57	.....	.....	3,530 30	3,837 82	325 00	2,500 00	968 73
Little Compton.....	745 48	300 00	25 72	473 20	25 00	1,569 40	1,569 40	.....	300 00	745 48
New Shoreham .....	563 61	300 00	47 00	315 00	.....	1,225 61	.....	.....	300 00	563 61
Jamestown .....	145 00	25 00	6 00	142 10	1 56	319 68	.....	528 44	35 00	145 00
Totals .....	\$6,916 15	\$13,715 00	\$671 37	\$2,404 14	\$478 61	\$24,185 27	\$17,257 50	\$1,714 28	\$12,385 00	\$6,916 15

TABLE I.—FINANCIAL STATISTICS.—CONTINUED.

NAMES OF TOWNS.	Amount received from the General Treasury.	Amount of Town Tax.	Registry Tax and other sources.	Rate Bills.	Balance unexpended.	Total—all sources.	Actually expended, exclusive of School Houses.	Expended in School Houses.	Amount of Tax next year.	Total apportioned from the General Treasury next year.
<b>WASHINGTON COUNTY.</b>										
South Kingstown.....	\$1,777 75	\$559 00	\$220 28	\$340 00	\$124 5	\$3,021 56	\$2,865 03	\$515 50	\$559 00	\$1,777 75
Westerly.....	1,108 47	331 64	138 51	.....	.....	1,638 62	.....	.....	331 64	1,108 47
North Kingstown.....	1,255 60	450 00	267 48	.....	565 40	2,538 48	2,535 02	30 00	450 00	1,255 60
Exeter.....	898 52	144 06	63 12	.....	225 64	1,331 34	1,126 57	.....	216 10	898 52
Charlestown.....	519 20	100 00	82 50	.....	84 99	1,320 30	1,235 31	.....	123 59	519 20
Hopkinton.....	1,121 56	140 89	111 39	533 61	.....	1,808 04	1,897 98	160 97	397 62	1,121 56
Richmond.....	923 48	200 00	155 80	524 20	209 14	1,496 42	1,105 47	25 00	225 00	923 48
Totals.....	\$7,601 58	\$1,925 59	\$1,039 08	\$1,407 81	\$1,209 70	\$13,246 76	\$10,766 26	\$731 47	\$2,232 95	\$7,604 58
<b>KENT COUNTY.</b>										
Warwick.....	\$2,338 76	\$1,500 00	\$565 47	\$238 00	\$312 13	\$4,954 36	\$4,062 45	.....	\$1,500 00	\$2,338 76
Coventry.....	1,540 48	420 50	289 25	390 52	349 98	2,990 73	2,024 23	483 65	420 50	1,540 48
East Greenwich.....	739 12	272 41	255 11	.....	79 69	1,346 33	.....	.....	272 41	739 12
West Greenwich.....	791 02	100 00	103 03	57 35	478 81	2,030 21	1,353 77	40 00	162 35	791 02
Totals.....	\$5,409 38	\$2,292 91	\$1,212 86	\$685 87	\$1,220 61	\$11,321 63	\$8,340 45	\$523 65	\$2,355 26	\$5,409 38
<b>BRISTOL COUNTY.</b>										
Bristol.....	\$1,275 16	\$4,300 00	\$657 38	.....	.....	\$6,232 54	\$6,117 16	\$286 90	\$4,300 00	\$1,275 16
Warren.....	669 89	2,400 00	28 71	83 72	320 67	3,532 99	3,342 17	.....	2,500 00	669 89
Barrington.....	265 03	250 00	29 00	131 50	.....	675 53	675 53	1,940 00	250 00	265 03
Totals.....	\$2,240 08	\$6,950 00	\$715 09	\$215 22	\$320 67	\$10,441 06	\$10,134 86	\$1,526 90	\$7,050 00	\$2,240 08
<b>RECAPITULATION BY COUNTIES.</b>										
Providence County.....	\$27,706 63	\$82,137 08	\$6,924 55	\$537 91	\$19,651 25	\$131,774 59	\$65,677 06	\$47,586 86	\$67,240 68	\$27,706 63
Newport.....	6,916 15	13,715 00	671 37	2,404 14	478 61	24,185 27	17,257 59	1,714 28	12,385 00	6,916 15
Washington.....	7,004 58	1,925 50	1,039 08	1,407 81	1,269 70	13,246 76	10,766 26	731 47	2,232 95	7,004 58
Kent.....	5,409 38	2,292 91	1,212 86	685 87	1,220 61	11,321 63	8,340 45	523 65	2,355 26	5,409 38
Bristol.....	2,240 08	6,950 00	715 09	215 22	320 67	10,441 06	10,134 86	1,526 90	7,050 00	2,240 08
Totals.....	\$40,006 62	107,021 19	\$10,162 96	\$5,250 95	\$23,080 84	\$190,069 81	\$119,177 08	\$14,086 10	\$61,574 89	\$40,006 62

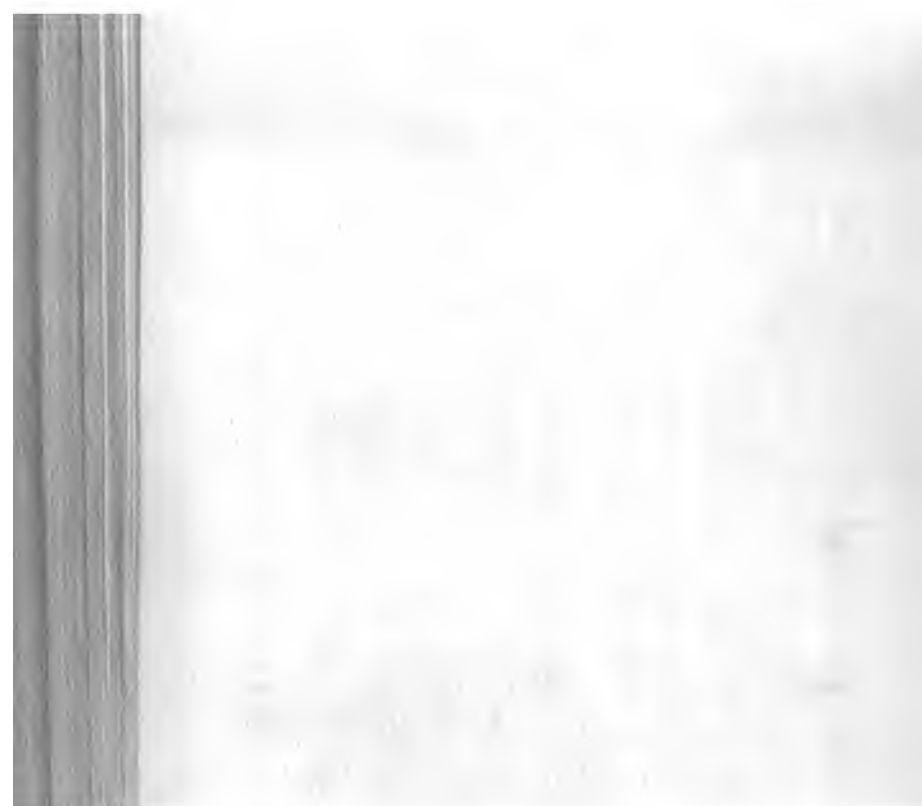
*Abstracts of the Returns of Public Schools in Rhode Island, for the  
year ending April 30th, 1858.*

**TABLE II. SUMMER SCHOOL STATISTICS.      TABLE III. WINTER SCHOOL STATISTICS.**

NUMBER OF TOWNS.	No. of Male Teachers.	No. of Female Teachers.	No. of Boys.	No. of Girls.	Whole No.	Average Attendance.	No. of Male Teachers.	No. of Female Teachers.	No. of Boys.	No. of Girls.	Whole No.	Average Attendance.
<b>PROVIDENCE COUNTY.</b>												
Providence .....	12	120	.....	.....	7,257	6,038	12	120	.....	.....	7,257	6,038
North Providence.....	6	25	896	797	1,693	1,274	10	22	1080	857	1,937	1,423
Smithfield .....	10	35	1364	1375	2,739	1,935	21	25	1488	1366	2,854	2,103
Cumberland .....	5	24	614	610	1,224	973	6	17	752	610	1,362	1,140
Scituate .....	.....	17	303	339	642	507	17	4	545	439	984	657
Cranston .....	1	21	569	574	1,143	828	2	21	679	579	1,258	771
Johnston .....	1	12	310	266	576	409	6	8	335	282	647	479
Glocester.....	2	14	197	219	416	341	11	1	227	166	393	290
Foster.....	.....	15	147	220	367	264	13	5	285	241	526	387
Burrillville.....	1	15	418	378	796	533	7	9	350	267	617	391
Totals.....	38	298	4818	4770	16,853	13,102	105	232	5771	4807	17,835	13,659
<b>NEWPORT COUNTY.</b>												
Newport.....	4	21	.....	.....	1,218	903	4	21	.....	.....	1,218	903
Portsmouth.....	1	6	76	79	155	100	4	2	136	46	182	150
Middletown.....	1	4	59	76	135	82	5	.....	95	49	144	67
Tiverton.....	.....	14	179	219	398	256	6	7	394	323	717	463
Fall River .....	4	9	333	312	645	421	12	.....	265	169	434	334
Little Compton.....	.....	10	94	114	208	146	6	4	167	102	269	208
New Shoreham.....	4	1	141	160	301	223	4	1	172	126	298	215
Jamestown.....	.....	2	22	25	47	38	1	1	32	13	45	25
Totals.....	14	67	904	985	3,107	2,169	42	36	1261	828	3,307	2,365
<b>WASHINGTON COUNTY.</b>												
South Kingstown.....	1	17	.....	.....	819	589	17	5	.....	.....	819	589
Westerly .....	1	5	102	101	203	151	11	3	340	210	550	284
North Kingstown.....	1	7	95	118	213	149	7	8	355	244	599	389
Exeter.....	2	4	71	82	153	84	9	1	192	114	306	199
Charlestown.....	1	5	45	73	118	84	6	2	112	106	218	158
Hopkinton.....	1	9	101	116	217	132	12	2	366	319	685	465
Richmond.....	4	2	104	134	238	158	14	2	237	102	419	296
Totals.....	11	49	518	624	1,961	1,347	76	23	1602	1175	3,596	2,380
<b>KENT COUNTY.</b>												
Warwick .....	12	12	961	862	1,823	1,124	12	12	961	862	1,823	1,124
Coventry .....	4	9	221	255	476	301	13	6	413	361	774	492
East Greenwich.....	.....	4	42	81	123	79	4	4	98	63	161	116
West Greenwich.....	.....	3	38	32	70	53	12	.....	147	124	271	189
Totals.....	16	28	1262	1230	2,492	1,557	41	22	1619	1410	3,029	1,921
<b>BRISTOL COUNTY.</b>												
Bristol .....	5	11	378	361	739	661	5	13	440	339	779	767
Warren.....	2	9	212	200	412	309	3	8	212	200	412	309
Barrington.....	.....	4	54	64	118	95	1	2	75	48	123	105
Totals.....	7	24	644	625	1,269	1,065	9	23	727	587	1,314	1,181

**RECAPITULATION BY COUNTIES.**

Providence County....	38	298	4818	4778	16,853	13,102	105	232	5771	4807	17,835	13,659
Newport " .....	14	67	904	985	3,107	2,169	42	36	1261	828	3,307	2,365
Washington " .....	11	49	518	624	1,961	1,347	76	23	1602	1175	3,596	2,380
Kent " .....	16	28	1262	1230	2,492	1,557	41	22	1619	1410	3,029	1,921
Bristol " .....	7	24	644	625	1,269	1,065	9	23	727	587	1,314	1,181
Totals.....	86	466	8146	8242	25,682	19,240	273	336	10980	8807	29,081	21,506



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FIFTEENTH

ANNUAL REPORT  
ON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

*In Rhode Island,*

MADE TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

AT ITS

JANUARY SESSION, A. D. 1860.

PROVIDENCE:  
KNOWLES, ANTHONY & CO., STATE PRINTERS.  
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# THE HISTORY OF THE

## REIGN OF KING CHARLES THE FIRST

IN WHICH ARE CONTAINED THE  
LIVES OF CHARLES THE FIRST, AND  
OF HIS SON CHARLES THE SECOND  
BY SAMUEL JOHNSON

LONDON: Printed by A. MILLAR, in Pall-mall, 1764.



# R E P O R T .

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*To His Excellency the Governor, and the }  
Honorable the General Assembly.*

GENTLEMEN:—

In the month of June last, I had the honor to receive, at the hands of the Governor of this commonwealth, a commission to that office which makes it my duty to report annually, to the General Assembly, “upon the state and condition of the schools, and of education, with plans and suggestions for their improvement.”

During the month of July, I visited a few of our schools, but I soon found that the approach of the summer vacation had so reduced the attendance, that the number of scholars brought under my supervision fell far below the number usually present. I therefore concluded to postpone further visitation until the beginning of the autumn sessions. This I should have resumed early in September; but sickness of a very alarming character, of a member of my family, made it my plain duty to remain by the bedside; so that it was not until October that I felt at liberty to enter again upon the discharge of my official duties. Since then, my time has been completely occupied in this direction.

During the last three months, besides attending to the labors of the Institute, and the details of the office business, which are by no means trifling, I have visited more than one hundred rural school districts, passing from an hour to an hour and a half in each school; noticing the general condition of the school and the house, observing the method of discipline and instruction, and offering

such suggestions and remarks as the circumstances seemed to require. I have also addressed meetings of the citizens in more than half of the towns of the State, upon various topics of educational interest. These visits and addresses I propose to continue until the entire circuit of the State is made.

The visits of your Commissioner have, without exception, been received with cordiality and respect. Committees, trustees and parents have made no inconsiderable amount of personal sacrifice, to render them pleasant and profitable. And what is most gratifying, these attentions were bestowed, not from any motives of personal regard, but were evidently the result of an increasing interest in the cause of education, and of an earnest desire faithfully to discharge important trusts committed to those who have the supervision of our free schools. I have reason to believe, that while this is the most agreeable, it is also the most valuable portion of the Commissioner's labor. *Personal intercourse* with parents and school officers is the only effectual way of removing those wrong impressions and prejudices against our school organization, which so impede its working progress; and of securing that interchange of opinion and sentiment so essential to the most beneficial results. Remove from the office this imperative duty, and you render it *almost a nullity*. Deprive our school system of this efficient agency, and you take out one of the stones from its foundation. This remark will of course be understood as applying to the *office* in its design.

It is especially gratifying to be able to assure you that, notwithstanding all the obstacles which are placed in the way of educational progress, by ignorance, prejudice and malice, its advancement in our State has been marked and steady. If we compare the present condition of our schools, with all their appendages and dependencies, with what it was only ten years since, the result will be found to have realized all reasonable expectations, though it may have failed to satisfy our earnest desires. It will certainly assure us that our labors have not been in vain; and that our expenditures in this regard, have been a most economical investment.

If it is anything to have caused the removal of those miserably dilapidated structures, illy arranged, deficiently lighted, imperfectly warmed, and every way forbidding, for school houses judiciously

located, tastefully constructed, conveniently arranged, fully lighted, comfortably warmed and properly ventilated, at once an ornament and a use, then has something been gained. If it is anything to have discarded those awkward compendiums, which were rather a hindrance than a help, and to have supplied their places with well-arranged, well-illustrated and simplified school books; then has something been gained. If it is anything to have secured, in some good degree, teachers whose mental and moral capacities, habits, tastes and requirements, united to professional zeal and dignity, qualify them for their high vocation, then has something been gained. If a more careful discharge of the responsible duties of school committees and trustees; has taken the place of carelessness and neglect; if, on the part of parents and guardians, a more earnest spirit, and a more intelligent interest in the cause of popular education, has taken the place of utter apathy and ignorance, then have we reason to rejoice in our educational advancement.

And yet, notwithstanding we have so much cause for congratulation and encouragement, there are some things remaining to regret and to correct. I wish it, however, to be understood, of any remarks which I may make upon the defects of individual parts of our school system, that I disclaim all personal imputation; and while it is my duty to call your attention to any imperfection in the working process, I rejoice to be able to assure you that what deserves praise, exceeds by far all that receives censure.

### SCHOOL HOUSES.

One great fault, in very many of our school houses, is that they are *too small*. They are not only deficient in length and breadth, but especially in height. As I entered many of them, they gave me the impression that the building committees had ascertained the exact number of scholars in the district,—had computed into how *narrow* a space they could be stowed, and had then built accordingly. Parents should remember, that the crowding so many healthy, active lungs into such limited spaces, soon vitiates the air in spite of the best arranged ventilation. Circulation is disturbed, the cheeks become flushed, the hands and the feet are too hot or too cold, and restlessness and inattention are the inevitable results.

Pale faces and withered forms every day tell us how sadly we neglect the physical comfort of our children. Narrow limits compel too compact an arrangement of the desks, so that the children cannot have that freedom of motion so essential to ease and comfort, during a half-day's confinement to a sitting posture. The passages, between the desks, are also too narrow, and the space for a platform, at the rear of the house, is either occupied by seats, or is so limited as to bring the class for recitation too near the black-boards. In this last particular, nearly all our school houses need remodeling. It is very essential, to promote facility in governing and instructing a school, that a liberal space be left at the rear of the desks, for a recitation platform, upon which the reciting class may be elevated, in such a manner as to give the teacher a command of it and the school, at one and the same time.

The most of our school houses are placed too near the public way, occasioning a constant annoyance, both to the teacher and the taught. When we consider how large a portion of the most impressible period of the lives of our children is passed within the walls of the school house, and how closely their history and destiny are connected with early impressions, we can hardly be too solicitous, that these places of their resort shall be so located, and so constructed, as to exert the most favorable influences upon their moral, intellectual and social nature. The habits, tastes, and sentiments of the children, are, in a few years, to become the manners, the institutions, and the laws of a nation. The chubby, mischievous, frolicsome boys of 1860 are to be the dignitaries of state of 1890.

In the erection of a school house, the first consideration should be its location, with reference to convenience, economy and taste. It should be placed where the greatest number may receive the best accommodation, and where the grading and fencing can be secured at an economical expenditure. I have seen several houses where the outlay for grading, more judiciously expended, would have added another foot to the height of the building, and a proportionate increase to its other dimensions, and have attached to bare walls and a naked exterior, such embellishment as would have rendered both more attractive and more useful.

I would have every school house placed upon some dry and *retired* spot, where this is practicable, as it is in all our rural dis-

tricts. Let it be properly elevated, of ample dimensions for the *easy* accommodation of the number designed to occupy it. Let *taste* and culture characterize all its external and internal arrangements. Let it present a *finished* appearance—the grounds spacious, well arranged, and neatly inclosed, and if the grateful shade of trees does not already fall upon the spot, do not fail to set them,—of such kinds and in such a manner, as shall secure a rapid and permanent growth. The school house should be the most attractive place in the district. Parents, trustees and school committees have yet to learn what a mighty moral agency lies in the character and condition of the school houses. With my immediate predecessor in office, I have been surprised at the painful contrast in many places between the character of the private residences and the public school houses. While the former were spacious, tasteful and often elegant, indicative of culture, wealth and comfort, the latter were meagre, awkward and unattractive,—anything but a complimentary reflection upon the whole neighborhood. Is it any wonder, that children sent from such homes to such houses, should feel a prejudice against the school, and all its connections and associations; that they should sometimes, almost unconsciously, ask themselves if such is a part of the “*beautiful*” system of education which their parents and teachers are never done talking about? *Children believe what they see.*

Besides, good school houses invite, if they do not create, good teachers. Every such teacher knows that a miserable, tottering, filthy building, with its gaping, uneven floor, broken and dirty ceiling, clattering windows, shrunken and unhinged doors, backless and shamefully disfigured seats,—is not the place to elevate the minds, the morals or the manners of pupils, who are cruelly degraded by any such associations. I am glad to be able to say, that there are only a few such relics of by-gone days remaining, a disgrace to the district, the town and the State. Miserable and contracted buildings, that had long ago outlived their usefulness, are fast yielding to substantial, ample, and often elegant structures. The people are becoming more and more alive to the importance of this change; and *attractiveness*, both in location and structure, is beginning to secure a proper consideration. Bald buildings and sites innocent of everything but rocks, ferns and barberry bushes, are getting out of demand for educational purposes. Im-

provement in school furniture is no less important than improvement in the houses themselves, and the very reasonable rates at which such furniture can now be obtained, should induce every district building a new house, or remodeling an old one, to furnish it. Single and double desks, with iron frames and separate stools or chairs, should take the places of those awkward contrivances which have annoyed and deformed so many of our precious youth.

### SCHOOL COMMITTEES.

And here I would say, in the very beginning, that I hardly know of a body of men, who, taken as a whole, perform so great an amount of public labor, at so great a sacrifice of personal comfort and means, and for so small a return of emolument and honor. For this state of things, our rural districts deserve the severest censure. The vital importance of the active labors of a competent school committee to the present and prospective well being of a town, seems to be altogether overlooked; and the office, in many cases, is left to itself, without recompense or reward. The senator, the representative, the treasurer, the overseer of the public way,—even he whose only duty is to look after the cattle in the street, often elicit more interest at the suffrages of the town, than do they to whom is entrusted the welfare of a future State. In many districts which I have visited, I have been obliged to repeat the question more than once, before I have ascertained who the school committee were. In this state of things, it is not strange that some should receive the appointment, who are in no way qualified rightly to discharge the responsible duties of the office. The wonder is, that there are so few of this class. For justice compels me to testify, that in a majority of the towns, those who constitute the school committees are those who represent most honorably the educational interest; men of intelligence, culture, zeal, and remarkable self-devotion to the great cause of popular education. They are the leaven which is to change the lump,—the salt which is to redeem the mass; men of elevated sentiments, of strong intellect, of sound judgment, and for the most part, of correct taste; men who know the value of a good education, and who have a practical conception of the essential prerequisites for

acquiring it; men who are not moved by praise or censure, but who push right on to duty, irrespective of aids or obstacles; men who are ready to make any reasonable or unreasonable sacrifice to accomplish their object, *i. e.* the right education of the youth of the State.

All this they are, and all this they do, without honor or profit. Their only reward is the inward consciousness of duty done. For, in some of the towns, they do not receive that *honorable* consideration to which their position entitles them; nay, they are allowed no compensation, nor even reimbursement. The law requires that the committees shall, "by one or more of their number, visit every public school in the town, at least twice during each term," (and every faithful committee will do it as often as this.) In many of the towns this would require a period of from five to thirty days, during the year, and an expenditure of from five to twenty dollars; and yet for all this labor and sacrifice, very many of our committees receive—nothing. And when any compensation is allowed, it rarely equals the wages of a common day laborer. To the question often put,—“How much are you paid for visiting the schools?”—the reply in many cases has been,—“Neither money nor thanks;”—and it is not a strange experience, that obstacles thrown in the way have been just in proportion to the faithful discharge of obligation; and often, when after repeated years of such gratuitous service, the propriety—not to say justice—of some compensation has been gently and respectfully suggested, the competent and the faithful have been dropped for the ignorant and the indifferent, to the shame and permanent injury of every such district. This ought not so to be. The office of school committee is the most useful, the most responsible, and should be considered the most honorable office in the gift of the town. It should only be filled by thoroughly competent men; and when filled, it should be sustained in the faithful discharge of its duties, by a reasonable compensation, and an efficient and hearty collaborating.

While I bear testimony to the fact that the most of our school committees are of the character described, I regret to add, that there are a very few cases of utter inefficiency and neglect on the part of such committees. I have found schools that had not been visited by a single member of the committee for entire terms, a manifest neglect of a legally enjoined duty. Committees, so neg-

ligent of this duty, may justly be suspected of carelessness in the discharge of some other obligations.

School committees are set as guardians at the entrance of our school houses, and the law imperatively requires of them, that they see to it, that no immoral or intellectually incompetent teachers ever enter them. Every such school officer should have a proper estimate, a distinct conception, and a practical apprehension of the object and range of the common school system. There should be no complimentary certificates. Positive merit should be the inexorable requirement of every school committee. Life, energy, *tact*, zeal in the profession, should be among the essential prerequisites of every certified teacher. Neither is it enough that he possess the power of acquiring knowledge—he should also have the facility of imparting knowledge; and these are by no means concomitant; many an accomplished scholar would make but an indifferent teacher.

Teachers should learn, emphatically, from our committees, that school houses are not designed as places of refuge for the indolent and the ignorant. The scores who make application to teach because they are too lazy or too illy qualified to succeed in any other business, should be made to understand that the profession of teaching is neither strengthened or elevated by their presence, and that it is not ambitious of any such accession to its ranks.

The teacher is rightly regarded as the most efficient agency for moulding the tastes and manners of a generation coming up out of the morning of its existence, fair as the sky, broad as the land, and, unless rightly directed, more terrible than an army. School committees should see to it, that no one of slovenly, awkward or vulgar habits, be placed as a model, before our children. They have no right to employ one who is unjust, immoral, idle or irreligious. The teacher should be the exponent of those external expressions which are indicative of justice, industry, kindness and benevolence. He should zealously cultivate in those committed to his charge, those virtues and affections which are the charm and joyousness of social life. The vast importance of *competency* in these particulars does not yet receive that consideration which the law contemplates, and which the future well being of our children demands. "The *morals* and the *manners*" of teachers should be matter of solicitous enquiry, and *after* these will come the equally



important, and perhaps not so easily determined question,—the ability rightly to develop and strengthen the young intellect, and to store it with knowledge,—with truth.

These moral qualities referred to, include something more than the absence of gross immorality; they include something more than the practice of virtue for its advantage; they are intended to imply a *love* of virtue for its own sake. Again, they include not only the practice of virtue, but the disposition and the power to inculcate it. The teacher should embody a moral power in his very person; so that in all his teachings, of what kind soever, there shall be a normal and beautiful earnestness coming fresh and vital from a full conviction of principles declared, as the light flows down from the sun. Nothing short of this genuine sincerity will give to his teachings that moral value and power, far beyond any reach of mere logical force, or of the “most exquisite verbal felicities.” And the text-book to assist him in this great and imperative duty, must be the BIBLE; not as a narrow book of *sectarian theology*,—NEVER! but as a broad, full hand-book of historical example, of moral precept, of revealed truth, of Christianity. I would have no man a teacher of youth who does not accept all this of the Bible; and far distant be the day when its sacred pages—revealing God and his supremacy, man and his accountability, holiness as essential to happiness, eternity and immortality,—shall be excluded from our common schools. And here I cannot refrain from quoting the remarks of Dr. Hall, occasioned by the death of Horace Mann. Moreover, his emphatic approbation of a normal school in this connection, will receive the hearty response of every right minded man. After speaking of the importance of moral qualifications in our rulers, he says:—

“At present, I would weigh these truths, and extend these remarks, with reference only to a single class of legislative and executive men—those whom we call teachers—or, by a larger name as commonly used, though in fact the same, *Educators*. It is an immense class, viewed in its first, professional character. It is a rapidly growing class, growing in numbers and power. The enlarging circle of sciences and varied branches of study coming to be considered essential; the multiplication of schools and seminaries of every kind; the high-sounding names taken, and honors given, by new as well as old institutions of learning; the rigid requirements of some and superficial training of many; the time demanded for continuous, ambitious and exhausting study, with the extended vacations from all study, indicate how different is the office of teacher now, from that of teacher

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or master even half a century ago; and indicate also the large place that this province of mind and of society already covers. Whatever else is thought of these changes and demands, it must be acknowledged that greater pains are taken in the selection and preparation of educators, than formerly. Infant minds, the most impressible of all, and calling for the most wisdom if not intelligence, are not so readily left to teachers who have never been taught, and whose only reason and qualification for teaching may be an inability to do anything else. Instead of this strange theory or thoughtless practice, our age is marked by the introduction of an element and institution the most needed and most valuable, in my opinion, of any yet tried—that designed to teach the teachers, and train them for their work, as men and women are trained for every other work under the sun. If men think this normal scheme a mere fancy or tax, and it shall therefore be abandoned, a step backward will be taken, and a mistake perceived too late, as blind and pernicious as that of cutting down the compensation of educators, weakening and degrading the whole calling. It need not be assumed that everything new in this department is wise, or all that some may deem it. But we may and will assume that the human mind, in child or youth, is the last instrument or material that should be subjected to the blows of a bungler, the slight of a trifier, the heartlessness of either a mechanical or tyrannical master. When every other profession and common craft are demanding higher qualifications, and more and more patience of time and toil,—strange, verily, if this, which governs the action of mind on mind, which decides the character of a generation, and moulds the institutions, alike, of learning, government and religion, is to be the one least honored, least rewarded, and worst filled. Such policy is not in accordance with any law of God; least of all with that law, so old and comparatively rude, as some say, which requires that all rulers shall be, at the least, “able men,” though placed only over bodies, property, and temporal peace.

But the law demands more—this and every law of God; and we pass to the higher requirement. Rulers of the mind, intellectual legislators, and moral governors, ought, above all others, to be *religious* men—men of truth, fearing God and hating covetousness. Frame an argument for requiring this of civil rulers, and it has ten-fold force as applied to this higher grade. For we hold the Educator to be above kings and pontiffs all, both in the kind and compass of his power; and if true, in dignity and divine right. Have men and nations so believed and declared? Only theoretically, if at all; never practically and consistently. And this is one cause of the slow progress of mind and truth toward the ascendancy designed and promised to them. Not only has this sublime and profound work of educating deathless minds been left to the ignorant and unskilled: it has been subjected, yet more blindly and fatally, to undisciplined tempers and unreligious workers. Not purposely, do we mean,—not consciously, it may be; but carelessly,

and with such thoughtlessness, or indifference, or sectarian jealousy, as amount to criminal neglect. I do suppose that under the early rule and virtual theocracy of the world, in the best days of Judaism, and in the best portions even of Gentilism, more attention was given to what was regarded as the religious character of those constituted teachers of youth, than has been generally given in the Christian age, especially in modern times. Not only is the intellectual demand put before the spiritual in the choice of teachers, not only are fashionable seminaries preferred to the useful, but there has come to be a virtual exclusion and prohibition of religious tuition. This is particularly true of our much applauded, and in many respects admirable, public school system. Open to all sects, it is thought necessary to forbid the religious, and almost moral element. Now, if this be necessary, the more momentous the need, the more palpable the obligation, to place over the whole system, in its government, discipline and instruction, from the primary to the collegiate grade, men of truth, men of God, whose spirit, character and whole influence shall of themselves religiously impress, and spiritually elevate, the whole mass of mind, morality and aim falling under their instruction. No irreligious teacher, no ungoverned temper, no narrow, timid, abject, selfish souls, should be suffered to make and leave their miserable impress upon that multitude of minds, which are to rule, if not fashion, the coming centuries. Be as earnest as you will, strict or liberal, to keep out dogmatism and jesuitism from your army of educators and world of learners; but if, in your zeal or indifference, you keep out Christ and Christianity, as truth, spirit, principle and power, impulse and aspiration, you educate for earth only, and that ruinously. The danger cannot be overrated. The magnitude of the responsibility and duty is surpassed by no other. A thousand considerations, which we cannot and need not name, make it imperative on all Christian communities, that they elect Christian men for this highest of all trusts—'able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness.'"

The teacher has to do not merely with the head, but with the heart. The will is to be disciplined; the moral and social sensibilities are to be nursed and matured; the lower appetites and propensities are to be controlled; conscience is to be enlightened; the whole man is to be *educated* for a higher and a better life. Do not let us do violence to the teacher's profession, by denying its connection with that which takes hold of Heaven and immortality. He who possesses the *moral qualities* which fit him for the high vocation of unfolding the infant mind to a moral, intelligent, deathless, endlessly progressive life, deserves a distinguished place among those whom the world would honor. And when we remember how impressible is the material of youth, how easily the still

waters may be changed to the gentle flow and the impetuous current, how solicitous should we be that none be elected to the trust of teaching, but such as are morally qualified to receive it. "To plume these wings for an upper or a nether flight; to lead these voices forth into harmony or dissonance; to woo these beings to go where they should go, and to be what they should be; does it, or does it not, require some knowledge, some anxious forethought, some enlightened preparation?"

There is evidence that, in some districts, school committees are too careless in their intellectual examinations of teachers. These examinations should be in writing, and should be *thorough*. They should be restored from a *farce* to a *fact*. Teachers should be required to possess not merely a knowledge of certain facts, but a perfect familiarity with the elementary *principles* of those branches which they may be required to teach. This knowledge should be found to embrace not only a familiar acquaintance with the *things* of the lessons, but with the entire *subject* of the lessons. <sup>He should</sup> He should manifest his ability not only to solve all difficulties *in* the lessons, but he must be able to answer all legitimate inquiries of an inquisitive mind, *immediately* without the lessons. He should ornament his science by literature, and strengthen his literature by science; and so possess the power of pre-occupying the minds of his pupils in favor of truth. His knowledge should be accurate, that it may be *truth*; it should be comprehensive, that it may be *truth illustrated*. Above all, he should be found to have tact—*aptness* to teach. Without this, all his other qualifications will be of little avail. It will require a variety of expedients to enable a committee to determine whether the teacher possesses this power; and here I would enumerate some of them, were it not that it might extend this report to an inordinate length. Indeed, so numerous are the topics that might be embraced in a communication of this nature, that I must be content with suggestions rather than prescriptions—with hints, rather than details.

School committees should impress upon the proper authorities, and upon parents, how desirable it is that thoroughly competent, energetic and successful teachers, be continued in the same school from year to year; and that this continuance be secured by an increase of salary. The accomplished teacher should no longer, in this particular, rank with the less competent. In the other pro-

fessions, and in the mechanic arts, superior talent and skill are expected to command increased compensation. The same distinction should be judiciously made in the teacher's profession.

I find that a large majority of the teachers of this State have entered upon the profession only as a temporary occupation, in the absence of more remunerative employment; and many who might, under other circumstances, be disposed to remain permanently in the profession, are forced, by the shortness and interruptions of our school terms, to employ a portion of their time in other avocations. Inadequate compensation is one of the retarding influences with which our common schools have to contend. A proper remuneration hardly keeps pace with the improvement in the qualifications, and the devotion to the arduous duties of the educational profession. Parents and guardians should be made to feel that their own prosperity, and the interest of the common school, are "one and inseparable;" and that a community will advance in all that gives to civilized society its excellence, just in proportion to the elevated character of its common schools. Place a hindrance upon a school, and you damage the character of the neighborhood in which it is located.

Many of our schools are robbed of their efficiency by two causes: on the one side, by those who are so insensible to the luxury of doing good, that they care not how low the condition of a school may be, so that it costs nothing; and on the other side, by those who, despairing of ever bringing our common schools to a proper elevation, lose at once their confidence and their interest in them, and send their children to private establishments. I could name more than one township in this commonwealth, where this condition of things has very materially impaired the public schools of those places.

Many of our schools are lamentably deficient in illustrative apparatus. A small sum expended in globes, outline maps, cubical blocks, and a few more simple contrivances, would wonderfully aid the teacher and advance the pupil. I hope our school committees will call the attention of the several towns and districts to this deficiency, and to the very great importance of supplying it. But lest I be thought to add to labors already sufficiently numerous, difficult and delicate, I will proceed to my next topic.

## TEACHERS.

It is a fact not to be concealed, and to which I refer rather as a misfortune than as a fault, that our teachers do not, give evidence of that preparation, that aptness to teach, that familiarity with principles and the best methods of teaching, that progress of our school system demands. I would not doubt their moral excellence, or their intellectual strength. In each particular they command our highest esteem and our dignified respect. They have alike the desire to do well and the power to do it; but a few of them lack educational culture. The material is excellent, but it requires the plastic hand of educational experience to mould it into practical shape. Our teachers have knowledge enough, but some of them do not know how to apply it to the business of teaching. The reason is, they have enjoyed neither instruction nor experience in this regard; and it is only within a few years that it was deemed a matter of the least consequence whether they had or had not enjoyed this advantage. It was thought that any body who could read, write and cypher, with a tolerable degree of facility, was competent to teach—at least, to teach little children. It does not follow because a man is a scholar, he is therefore a teacher. If it does not require something above, it requires something besides, a profound philosopher, to constitute a good school-master. President Humphrey, referring to the graduates and under-graduates of our colleges, said: "It seems to be taken for granted, that because they have studied Greek and Latin, and Conic Sections, they must know all about the business of a common school education. This is one of the best examples of *non sequitur* that I can think of. Because a young man can read Demosthenes and calculate eclipses, he must be eminently qualified to teach a primary school! It is no disparagement to some of the best classical scholars, to say that they are not fit for common school-masters. They can educate teachers a great deal better than they can teach a-b-a-b-s; and 'when the sky falls we shall catch larks.' Experience abundantly proves that many who go from college halls to try their hand in district school-houses, are greatly surpassed by some who never saw a college in their lives; and if it were the main object of a collegiate



education to furnish school-masters, every one must see how inadequate would be the supply." A more just apprehension of the subject is convincing the community, and teachers themselves, that this is the truth. The method of imparting knowledge acquired what some of our teachers have yet to learn. This is an *art*, a *trade*,—one that must be learned like any other trade. A shoemaker may be abundantly supplied with pegs, hammer and awls, lap-stone and waxed-ends, sole leather and upper leather—with all the *material* of his trade—but if he have not the *trade* itself, he will be but an indifferent cobbler; and the requirement of skill in any department of art, is just in proportion to the importance of that to which the art relates. A stupid day laborer may serve to trench a drain, but he would not be trusted to adjust a telescope.

But a teacher should not only *know how* to communicate truth,—to make impressions,—he should have some proper apprehension of the character of that which he is to educate—to mould into shape. He should remember that it is not *matter*, but *mind*,—*that intelligent something*,—the image of its Author, which is committed to his hands; and that every impression made upon it—whether properly or improperly, whether for good or for evil—is an impression forever. The soul of a little child admits of no bungling experiments. Not so with matter. Into whatever forms we fashion it, the rust of ages crumbles them all back to dust again; but the immortal part of every little child, however forbidding its exterior or degrading its condition, is destined to live when the round world is ashes!

It is upon this that the teacher is to exercise his formative power,—to mould it for useful ends and an endless life. To do this successfully, he should understand something of its construction. He should know that it has a complex nature; that it is not only by its instrumentalities, capable of seeing, hearing and handling, but that it is also capable of perceiving, remembering and reasoning; that it cannot only remember a proposition, but that it can understand it; that it cannot only hear a sentiment, but that it can determine whether it be true or false; that it cannot only receive the premise and the conclusion, but that it can, in many cases, trace the connection between them. Every teacher should remember, too, that the soul of a little child includes not only an understanding, but a conscience; not only an imagination, but a will; that it

is capable of loving and hating, as well as of reflecting and judging. He should also have some regard to the *order of development* of these several powers and faculties.

Here is the teacher's great responsibility. All these various faculties of the child are delivered over to him, to be developed,—to be educated. How can he do it if he does not understand them? How can he do it if he does not acknowledge their activity and their power? It is not expected—nor is it necessary—that every teacher should be a profound philosopher or an accomplished scholar; but to be eminently successful, he must understand something of these elements which make up the motive power of the child's mind. No one faculty should be taxed at the expense, or to the neglect of any other; and yet how often is this done—how sadly too often. How many of our teachers do I see instructing their pupils as though the only mental faculty was the memory, and governing them as though the only thing to be disciplined was the will. Children are required to “say their lessons,” but the idea that they are capable of understanding them, or that it is of the least consequence whether they do or not, would hardly be conjectured. The memory is taxed, as of course it should be, but the understanding is ignored. A thousand *lessons* are heard, but not a solitary *principle* is taught. Now what is all such “teaching” worth? Of what use is the merely verbal knowledge of all these facts, crowded away in the memory? Like any other raw material, valueless for all practical purposes. The cotton and the wool stored in our warehouses is worth nothing while there. It must be carried out to the workshop and the factory, the jenny and the loom, before it becomes fit for use. So the material in the memory must be taken down to the understanding, the workshop of the mind, and there by processes of thought, under the superintendence of the judgment, it must be twisted into principles, and woven into practical truth, before it can serve the great purposes of life. But it will be replied, this material must *first* be accumulated. True; but it must *then* be used, and *children* should be taught *how* to use it. A disciplined memory is one thing; a cultivated intellect is another. The great business of the schoolmaster is to evolve, invigorate and mature the *power of thought*, and to do this in the midst of ten thousand annoyances and interruptions; and to do it skillfully, effectually, he should be as

familiar with all the elements which go to make up what we call education, as he is with his own fingers. He should be *explosively* active. His mind should possess almost ubiquity. It must be an intellectual omnibus, filled full with all manner of wisdom—and with “room for one more.” It should be fruitful of educating expedients.

This, and much more suggested by it, the teacher should possess, thoroughly to qualify him for his work. And that some of our teachers do not possess this, is, as I have said, their misfortune rather than their fault. For the want of it, they deserve our sympathy rather than our censure. Nearly every one of them would be glad to avail themselves of such preparation, but they have not the means,—they cannot afford to make the necessary sacrifice of time and money. For when we take into consideration the magnitude of their charge, no class of persons are so poorly paid as our teachers. The day-laborer in our fields, the employees in our factories, are many of them more liberally compensated than are those unto whom we entrust the present and future well being of our children.

I have observed in some teachers, a great lack of system. They enter the school in the morning without any well defined arrangements for the duties of the day, and that recitation is required which first suggests itself to the memory, or that class is called out which first meets the eye. I think it would be well for every teacher to assign a stated time for every recitation; and if the school is large, let him have a written schedule, specifying the number of each recitation and the amount of time allotted to it. This might be posted in such a manner that the school would become familiar with it. This arrangement would ensure economy of time, and inculcate the importance of systematic habits, and so prevent a world of annoyance in the after life of the young.

The whole process of education is an artificial, not a natural process, and requires constant care and strenuous effort. The intellect of a child left to itself would never become cultivated. Teachers must be impressed with the necessity of a laborious, earnest, self-sacrificing spirit. If they expect improvement and advancement on the part of their pupils, they must themselves make manifest an earnest desire for self culture and progress.

They must let their light so shine,—not with the dimness of the departing, but with the brightness of the coming day.

Moreover, they should unite to make teaching a profession, and a *learned* profession. This can only be accomplished by aiming at high professional qualifications, professional dignity, professional self-respect; by acknowledging none as members of the profession who are not qualified, both by mental endowment and intellectual culture, to adorn it. It is encouraging to know that this is taking place. Men of talent and accomplishment are finding a field for their genius in the cause of popular education, and distinguished professors in our colleges are seeking the post of honor in our common schools.

### STUDIES.

In nearly all of our public schools the ordinary English branches are taught, and in many of them with a completeness that will compare favorably with our high schools and academies. Since many of the text-books of the natural sciences have been so admirably arranged and simplified, it is well to consider, if they may not, with propriety and advantage, be introduced into some of our schools at once, and into all of them eventually. For we must labor to make our common schools very *uncommon*. I want to see the wonderful illustrations of Natural Philosophy, and the captivating charms of Botany familiar in all our school houses.

I find that there is a little reaction in the study of mental arithmetic. This is natural. There was a period when the tendency was to make too much of it. It failed to realize all it promised. Celerity was mistaken for profundity; mental activity for intellectual strength; but yet it has its merit, and should have its place in every school. It is an important agency in furnishing to "all ages" that thorough mental drilling in the analysis of numbers which forms the true basis of all mathematical knowledge.

The subject of syllabication is too much neglected; and scholars are also allowed to *shingle* their words, instead of being required to enunciate each word and syllable clearly and distinctly. I apprehend this habit arises from allowing pupils to answer too much by classes—*simultaneously*. A better method would be to require, occasionally, each member of a class to answer by himself, and then,

not "in turn," but by numbers, alternating here and there, so as to secure the preparation of the whole class upon any given lesson. Require them, also, to punctuate when they write upon the black-board, slate, or upon paper, and to be careful of the abbreviations.

### TEXT-BOOKS.

In many of our schools, the evil is not so much the want of text-books of the proper kind, as it is the want of uniformity in these books. It is indispensable to the proper classification of a school, to the economy and efficiency of the labors of the teacher, and to the most thorough improvement and rapid progress of the pupils, that the text-books be uniform. There is, however, in this regard, a manifest improvement in many of our districts. Committees, trustees and parents are beginning to feel its importance, and to unite in securing its beneficial results.

### GOVERNMENT.

The government of our schools is, for the most part, unexceptionable; at least, it is a great improvement over that of past years. I hesitate not to say, that the discipline of our school houses is better than that of our nurseries; and that those parents who are so quick to discover the "motes" of the first are quite blind to the "beams" of the second. Teachers who govern themselves, as a general rule, have no serious difficulty in governing their schools; and pupils yield the most ready obedience and respect to those who, themselves, manifest self-respect.

### INSTITUTE.

A Teachers' Institute was held in Providence during the fourth week of October. It was considered by those qualified to make an estimate and comparison, eminently successful. More than three hundred teachers entered their names, and the attention and interest manifested at the beginning was maintained to the end.

The teachers whom I have subsequently met in my visits at their schools, have referred to it as a gathering of much pleasure and profit. The drill exercises, including methods of teaching, were conducted by Professors Greene and Dunn, of Brown University; Messrs. Colburn and Goodwin, of the Normal School; Rev. Francis T. Russell, of Conn., and Mr. George B. Loomis, of Providence. All the exercises were of a very practical and instructive character, and must have left upon the minds of the teachers present impressions of permanent professional advantage. Evening lectures were delivered by Rev. J. M. Manning, of Boston; George Sumner, Esq., of Boston; Rev. Dr. Anderson, of Roxbury, Mass., and Gen. H. K. Oliver, of Lawrence, Mass. These discourses were of the highest order of excellence, and added an attractiveness and a value to this institutional gathering, which the friends of education in the city and State will remember with gratitude and delight. These institutes are accomplishing a mighty work in lessening the apathy and prejudices of the people against any well arranged school system. They remove much of misapprehension concerning the great educational movements of the age; afford suggestions in the management and regulations of schools, and practical illustrations of the improved methods of teaching, which will by degrees correct bad habits and false conceptions, and convert them into active and efficient co-operative elements, in the cause of popular education. Moreover, by discussions and lectures, they afford easy interchanges of opinion and experience in matters of vital importance to the proper elevation of the teacher's profession.

It gives me pleasure to add, in this connection, that the R. I. INSTITUTE OF INSTRUCTION, an old and almost dead association, has been revived, and that some of our young and accomplished teachers are infusing a life and energy into it, which give it an earnest of much good. Under their direction, meetings have been held in some half-dozen of our villages, gathering to them the teachers and citizens of the neighborhood, who testify to the interest and advantage of such exercises. The result of these gatherings will be manifestly and permanently felt throughout our school system, by cultivating a fraternal *esprit du corps* among the teachers, and by moulding public opinion to a more efficient co-operation in the great labor of the education of our youth.

## EDUCATIONAL JOURNAL.

The Rhode Island Schoolmaster has commenced its sixth year, with every prospect of increased usefulness. It has accomplished a good work in the past, and will undoubtedly do more in the future. It reaches every portion of the State, and its design is to awaken and increase interest in educational matters among teachers and parents. For several years past, it has been under the care of a gentleman of large experience in teaching, and who is also engaged in a department of one of our public schools. When it is remembered how much of his time must necessarily be devoted to the duties of his school, the zeal, the ability and the untiring industry manifested in the editorial department will be duly appreciated.

While a journal of this kind everywhere commends itself as an important aid in the cause of popular education, it is with pleasure that I have observed an increasing interest in its support on the part of teachers. In connection with this office, I regard it as an important medium for communicating with the State.

The present editor is, I learn, to be assisted in its management for the coming year, by a corps of the best teachers of the State, thus adding to its *practical* usefulness.

It has been found difficult, even in the larger States, to sustain an educational periodical, and there are now but few of the Northern and Eastern States that do not furnish a liberal assistance to their respective State educational journals. This assistance is generally in the form of a subscription for a certain number of copies, to be sent to the several school boards. The sum thus appropriated by the different States varies from \$300 to \$2000. In accordance with the recommendation of my predecessor, the last General Assembly passed an act, almost unanimously, modifying the provision of the law in regard to educational lectures and addresses, by which the sum of \$300 (of the \$500 appropriated for lectures) were expended for copies of the *Schoolmaster*, to be distributed to the various rural districts of the State. By this arrangement, a copy has been sent to each of the three hundred and fifty districts of the State.

I deem it my duty to recommend that the same appropriation

be made the coming year; and I would add, in the words of my predecessor, that "perhaps in no other way could the same sum of money be better appropriated to the cause of popular education."

### NORMAL SCHOOL.

Since your assembling in May—as you already know—a sudden and mysterious Providence has deprived the Normal School of its most efficient head. In the death of DANA P. COLBURN, our State has lost a model teacher, and the cause of education a most zealous and energetic laborer. To the unanimous sentiment of affection and respect of the community in which he lived, has been added the general tribute of the press, testifying to the worth and genius of the man, the truthfulness and geniality of the friend, and to the earnestness and peculiar fitness of the educator. He was a conscientious, thoroughly devoted, *vitalized*, self-educated man. Egotism and selfishness were not elements of his character. The highest and most disinterested motives kept him persistently at his peculiar work—the *education of the educators*. His mental endowments, his intellectual culture and his social habits, combined to fit him for this important and most difficult labor. How well he succeeded in it, the increased professional zeal of more than half of the teachers of our State most abundantly testifies. But few men of his culture can descend to instruct in the working particulars of a teacher's vocation. This Mr. Colburn could do with a facility and a directness which lent a charm and newness of life to the most uninteresting details. Celerity, rather than breadth, was the characteristic of his mind. He was more swift than profound, more earnest than thoughtful. If he could not generalize comprehensively, he never failed to vitalize facts. If he was deficient in breadth and largeness of design, he excelled in delicacy and rapidity of execution; and he imparted his kindled zeal to whatever he touched. Above all, he added to the zeal of the teacher and the grace of the scholar, the highest expression of religious and christian sentiment. Let us manifest our appreciation of his worth, and our gratitude for his labors, by giving permanency and increased efficiency to that institution which received so much of the energy of his mind and the sympathy of his heart.



Twenty years' experience has established not merely the advantage, but the necessity, of normal schools to maintain and complete the advancement which we boast of in our system of popular education. The demand everywhere is for more thoroughly qualified teachers; for men who not merely know *enough* to teach, but who know *how* to teach. The elementary branches are taught, and are well taught, in our high schools and academies. But in order to furnish the best class of teachers, something more than this instruction is necessary. They need to know the best methods of teaching and governing common schools. This knowledge, normal schools are designed to impart. They not only teach the teacher, —all schools do that,—but they *teach the teacher how to teach*. It is this that makes them, in the highest degree, practical and advantageous. Teaching is both an art and a science. It has a practice, and it has principles upon which this practice is based. It is a trade, and an apprenticeship must be served. It is a profession, and the best models must be consulted.

Other professions have their normal schools. At law, the student is not expected to pass all his time over the pages of Blackstone and Chitty. He has his mock court, his judges, his juries, his witnesses, his briefs, and all those appliances which relate to the practical dispensing of justice. He is drilled in these, and graduates a better lawyer than he could otherwise be. So, in our theological schools, those who resort thither are not required to puzzle forever among Hebrew idioms, or to follow interminably the thread of ecclesiastical history; they are taught to write sermons, and to preach them, too. So, in our normal schools, they have their model school attached, and "normal scholars have an opportunity to try their skill in teaching and governing under the general superintendence of the principal." And we must remember that it is not the normal scholar alone who receives this advantage,—*it is the school which he subsequently teaches*. It appears to me, that those who object to the normal school on account of the small number of those who attend it, altogether overlook this important fact. By the instruction in our normal school, we not merely benefit thirty teachers,—we confer a perpetual favor upon a thousand scholars.

This is not all. Normal schools not only have a *direct* agency in raising the standard of popular education; they have an *indirect*

agency. The model teachers whom they graduate will, by the force of example, stimulate their less accomplished brethren to higher attainments, and will suggest to them better methods of instruction and government. This is a universal experience in all the arts. "A single turnpike, passing through a section of country where the scraper had never been seen before, will in a short time wonderfully improve all the cross-roads for miles and miles on both sides of it. It is the *model* road for all the highway surveyors, far and near. So with the agricultural school. Though the pupils may be few in number, yet when they come to be scattered abroad over the farming districts, they will not only teach others what they have been taught themselves, but thousands will watch their improved methods of cultivation, and profit by them."

It is not pretended that *all* who graduate at normal schools are *model* teachers. But this is not the fault of the schools; it is rather the misfortune of the scholars. It will not be claimed that every "regularly graduated" lawyer is an ornament to the bar; and some of our "ordained" theological students confirm the Divine assurance that "the weak things of this world are" sometimes "chosen to confound the things that are mighty." But nobody charges these results upon Cambridge or Andover.

The plea that our normal school should be abandoned because we have lost its principal, is simply absurd. Did we cease to avail ourselves of the agency of steam when Fulton died? Has a knowledge of the law of gravitation become of no consequence because Kepler and Newton sleep with their fathers? Shall we abandon all the advantages of science, all the aids of the mechanic arts, because those who have opened their use to us have returned to dust? No; let us rather honor their memories by striving for new explorations and more important inventions.

The round of education "is a circle which returns upon itself, and will continue to return to the end of time. The procession of children coming up upon the stage has no end. Wait ever so long, it will not pass by. When we depart they will still be coming, and in closer ranks than ever. Those who are centuries behind will surely come, and the great business of every generation will be to educate the children of the next. What, therefore, our hands find to do, let us do it with our might."

Let our normal school be permitted to remain until its impor-

tant design shall be accomplished, so shall the educational interests of Rhode Island be most effectually subserved; and incompetent teachers will gradually retire from our borders. So shall our common schools advance, until every parent shall be forced, by a selfish interest, to send to them, because they are the *best*. A pretty extensive observation enables me to say that the *emphatic* sentiment of the *best educators* of our commonwealth, is entirely favorable to our present school system; and that a retrograde step, in any direction, would be impolitic and disastrous.

### CO-OPERATION OF PARENTS.

The *desideratum* to render our schools what we would have them to be, is the *hearty co-operation of parents*. They must, by *personal solicitation* in each district, be induced to visit the schools, and so manifest to their children that they are in earnest in the great matter of their education. Your commissioner has felt that in no way could his labors be so useful to the State, as in this direction. When this object is accomplished, then, and not until then, will that terrible evil, *absenteeism*, which stands like an opposing giant at the very threshold of all educational progress, be effectually removed. Parents will then be made to see and feel that the obtaining an education, and this, too, in its broadest and completest sense, is THE BUSINESS of the young,—just as ploughing, planting and reaping is the business of the husbandman. They will be persuaded that the question should be, not—Can my child be spared from home? but, Can he be spared from school? not, “Are the chores done?” but—Are the lessons learned? The parent should be made to feel that nothing but the most inexorable necessity will justify him in taking from the child a single hour of the study time of his youth. *This belongs to the child; the parent has no right to it.*

This change in public sentiment can only be accomplished by inducing parents to make frequent visits to the school room; that they may there see, for themselves, the great work which our admirable school system is accomplishing for those whom they hold dearer than their own lives; and how essential their co-operation is to the consummation of this great good. It is in this direction

that those who have in trust our educational interests, are to labor; for all improvement in our public school system must depend, ultimately, upon the people themselves. To accomplish the result referred to, there must be a thorough change of public sentiment. Like all great movements, its progress must be slow.

### MUSIC.

I omitted, in its connection, to urge upon our school committees the importance of introducing vocal music into all our schools. Independent of its physical advantage, it never fails to exert a powerful and refining influence in the cultivation of moral and social character. The experience of our most gifted teachers testifies, unanimously, to its important aid in discipline; and that often a song, like oil, has stilled the turbulent waters of a school-room. It affords a most delightful and impressive medium for imparting moral and religious instruction. Its presence is always elevating, cultivating in the young soul habits of order and obedience, kindness and love. In every school which I have visited, at all remarkable for the *beauty of its discipline*, I have found the practice of singing; and in many of those schools where this exercise was neglected, if the boys were not yet quite "fit for treason, stratagems and spoils," they afforded every indication that they very soon would be. I trust the day is not distant when music will be deemed indispensable in the order of educational exercises; and when a school without its anthem, will be as strange as spring without its song.

### CONCLUSION.

Notwithstanding all delinquencies, the sources of encouragement in the practical working of our school system remain, in the increased and increasing interest manifested by parents and guardians in the educational welfare of their children and wards; in the zeal and more efficient supervision of school officers; in the higher professional skill of faithful teachers, and in the confidence and hope which has taken possession of the friends of education generally, who, encouraged by what has already been achieved, look forward to a full realization of their most ardent desires.

While we congratulate ourselves upon what has already been

accomplished, and so take courage for further effort, let us, also, not fail to enquire, if we have made all the progress in our power? if we have accomplished all the results which the advancement of society, the elevation of humanity, and the right education of the young so imperatively demand? Have the minds of our children been so developed, illuminated and purified by judicious exercise, by sound learning and elevated moral sentiment, as to prepare them for the active duties of men; for the solution of the multiplying problems of social and national life; and for the keeping of the varied trusts which must soon be committed to them by their fathers, as we received them from ours? Have we, as a State, done all that we could do, for the further advancement of this great work of popular education? Have we organized and vitalized these agencies, which shall secure to each succeeding generation, in endless renewal, a preëminence over that which preceded, so that in our republic, as in the republic of Sparta, while our fathers, who yet "linger in the west," say—

" We have been, in days of old,  
Wise, generous, brave and bold ;"

and we who are in the middle of life, confidently add—

" That, which in days of yore we were,  
We at the present moment are ;"

our children may, with patriotic enthusiasm, respond—

" Hereafter, at our country's call,  
We promise to surpass you all."

For, let us remember that if we have not done this, then we have failed in duty,—we have committed an error which no future regrets can make amends for. Whatever we have failed to do which we might have accomplished, must remain a failure forever. Any advancement which we might have secured, and have not, must be so much deducted from our final progress. This is alike true of individuals and of communities. A mistake here is a mistake forever. It has gone into the unchangeable past, and no created or creative hand can take it out. But regrets for that which has gone should fill us with new desires and new hopes,—with ardent aspiration and fresh endeavor for that which is to come. Let us impair none of the instrumentalities which have been thus far applied,

with so much success, for the better education of our children,—for inculcating in them “the principles of piety, justice, and a sacred regard to truth, love to their country, humanity, universal benevolence, sobriety, industry and frugality, chastity, moderation and temperance, and those other virtues which are the ornament of human society, and the basis upon which a republican constitution is founded.” Yea, let us rather, by a wise legislation, impart new vitality and increased energy to the system so successfully introduced, which promises to take every child within our borders out of the way of ignorance and vice, and lead it into the path of knowledge and virtue. Let us listen unto the voice of Wisdom crying unto us from within and without; “uttering her voice in the streets; crying in the chief place of concourse, in the opening of the gates,”—“Behold I will pour out my spirit unto you; I will make my words known unto you.”

Allow me now to present extracts from the reports of the committees of the several cities and towns. They will be found interesting, as indicating the progress of educational improvement in the several districts of our Commonwealth. It would be a desirable improvement if these reports—all of them—were printed, and of uniform size. I respectfully recommend this to the attention of committees.

### PROVIDENCE.

The following extracts, from the very able report of the school committee, refer to the folly of mingling politics into our school system, the false economy of cheapening teachers, and the importance of the coöperation of parents:—

“Popular education is too sacred a matter to be mixed up with political or sectarian strife. It thrives best in the serene atmosphere of a healthy public sentiment. Its friends are seldom men of noise and contention. It is an unselfish regard for the present and prospective welfare of the community, which leads them, gratuitously, to devote to this work so largely of their time and talents. Some slight appreciation of those services would seem to be only just. But if, instead of this, the constituted guardians of our schools are to be assailed, their motives aspersed, and their acts condemned, on the authority of street rumors, or anonymous communications, appealing to the

worst passions of the rabble, we may regard the day as not far distant, when men, worthy to have charge of such a trust, will be found unwilling to accept it.

"It is evident that our schools cannot maintain their present standing, much less can they go steadily forward, as they should, without able and experienced teachers. It has been, and is the policy of the committee, to employ only those of the highest order of excellence. But such are always in demand, and can no more be secured for an inadequate compensation, than they can be retained without some appreciation of their merits.

"It was, therefore, matter of sincere regret to us, that under the pressure of the recent financial troubles, you found it necessary to cut down the teachers' salaries, which before hardly gave us a fair chance in the competition with other cities, for the best talent. That reduction has already lost to our schools the services of four of our best teachers; is rendering others uneasy under the offer of more remunerative situations elsewhere, and throws a most serious obstacle in the way of filling vacancies to our own satisfaction, or that of the people.

"It seems to us, that in any necessary reduction of city expenses, our schools should be about the last to suffer. Yet, by our last annual report, it was shown that these had suffered in this way far more than any other branch of the city service. In ten years, their share of the city expenses had been reduced from thirty to fourteen per cent.; the increase of teachers' salaries in ten years had been only ten per cent.; while that of our principal municipal officers had gone up, in the same time, on a scale varying from fifty to two hundred and thirty per cent. \* \* \* \*

"In view of these facts, may we not hope that you will soon be disposed at least to restore the salaries to their former standard. We maintain that, in a matter so vital, the groundless cry of extravagance ought not to deter us from aiming to furnish the best teachers, books, buildings and other facilities for the thorough education of our children. \* \* \* \*

"No point is more constantly, nor hitherto more unavailingly urged in the reports of the Superintendent and of the general and district committees, than the need of a more active and cordial co-operation of parents with the teachers. Greater punctuality in attendance and proficiency in study would so be secured; much severity of discipline might be avoided, while such a knowledge of each pupil's peculiarities of character and disposition as his parents only can give, will enable the teacher to act intelligently in suppressing faults and developing excellencies.

"The bearing of this matter on the *reputation* of our schools is not to be overlooked. Complaints are made every day, the utter groundlessness of which would appear on a single visit to the teacher. For example:— we hear frequent complaints, on the one hand, that the scholars are driven forward too rapidly, and on the other, that they are unduly held back. Now,

under our present arrangements, this matter is almost entirely in the hands of parents. A schedule is arranged, and every family represented in the schools is supplied with a copy, in which a specified amount is assigned to each grade of pupils, for each term of continuance in school. Scholars may pass from any grade to a higher, at the commencement of any term, on sustaining an examination in the studies to which that higher grade has attended. Here, then, is ample provision for either a slow or rapid advance, as the health or talents of the pupil, or the wishes of the parent shall dictate. These wishes are always complied with when made known, and it is hardly just for parties to complain, who have not first expressed their desires. But nothing is more common.

"Our schools cannot reach their highest efficiency until the intimate and confidential intercourse we speak of, shall be secured; until the parents come more generally to visit the schools, and see for themselves. Many of them have never yet entered, except, perhaps, on an "exhibition day," the rooms where their children are receiving some of their most potent and lasting impressions.

A. H. CLAPP,

For the Committee."

The following important extracts are taken from the Superintendent's report:—

"Our intermediate and primary schools may, as a whole, be regarded as satisfactory, although many of them can and ought to be improved. Too much time is now spent in governing and disciplining, and too little in earnest, faithful teaching. The efficiency of these schools depends, almost entirely, upon the skill and devotion of the teacher. No one can be eminently successful, who has not experience in teaching,—tact and sound judgment in discipline. These schools would be much improved, were more time spent in teaching the elementary sounds of the vowels and consonants, and the more difficult combinations. A clear and distinct articulation is absolutely essential to a good reader. \* \* \* \* As a general rule, teachers should be held responsible for the good condition of their schools. They may not always be able to remove all the obstacles to their success. Yet no conscientious teacher will remain long in a position where he is unable to secure the highest interests of those committed to his care. There is no situation where skill and a faithful performance of duty are more apparent than in the school-room; and there is no profession in which the mental and physical energies are so severely tasked as in thorough teaching. The usual routine of the school-room may be passed through with but little effort; but this is not teaching. Something more is requisite to ensure the highest success than in listening to the daily lessons, recited with verbal accuracy from the text-books. This duty may be performed without any exhaustion of mind



or body. But to perform the highest functions of a teacher ; to arouse and quicken the youthful mind, and so to present the elements of knowledge that they may be clearly apprehended and permanently retained, requires almost superhuman effort. Eminent success cannot be attained without large experience, and a careful preparation for the daily tasks. A teacher must throw his whole soul into his work ; a dull and monotonous manner will invariably make stupid and lifeless scholars ; and knowledge thus secured will soon pass from the mind, and be forgotten. But little can be accomplished without an earnest, emphatic manner. Teachers often err in being too mechanical, and in neglecting to cultivate the reasoning powers of their pupils. Mere verbal knowledge, however extensive and exact, is of but little value. The principal aim of teachers should be, to show not only how knowledge can best be acquired, but how to preserve and use it most effectually, when acquired.

\* \* \* \* \* "It is a remarkable fact, and worthy of serious consideration, that many of the most valuable discoveries in science and the useful inventions of art, have been made by those who received their earliest training in our public schools ; and more than three-fourths of all the patents that have been issued in this country, have been granted to those whose inventive geniuses have been called into active energy by the discipline and the cultivation that is free to all.

"Who can now compute the immense value of the products of minds thus trained to patient thought and rigid investigation ? And who can assign any limit to the mental energy that is now being evolved in our youth, by these intellectual processes ? Many there are, at the present time, who, by their knowledge of the laws of nature, and by a skillful combination of her forces, are individually performing, through their inventions, the labor of thousands and tens of thousands.

"The moral power of education is still greater. It has no limit, neither in time nor eternity. It not only exalts to the highest dignity in the present life, but it opens a glorious future. While ignorance corrupts and degrades, it has no power but for evil. All its associations are low, grovelling, sensual. It is ever the prolific source of vice and crime of every hue. The history of every age and of every government proclaim this with a warning voice.

"Is it not, then, a wise policy, as well as an imperative duty, to diffuse the rich blessings of education as widely as possible—to bring every child under its elevating, refining power ; to roll back the tide of iniquity that ignorance and ungoverned passions are bringing upon us ? Fearful, indeed, are the responsibilities of those who are to decide the destinies of the future.

DANIEL LEACH, Superintendent."

## NEWPORT.

The remarks taken from the report of the committee are decidedly *ad rem*, and, it is hoped, that before they fall to the ground they will reach effectively *ad hominem* :—

“ But the main object of this report is, after all, to exhibit to your honorable body, not so much the prosperity as the failings and the embarrassments of the public schools. It were easy, but unnecessary, to display further evidences of good fortune and success. When a man consults a physician, he passes by the fact of his usual good health, with the merest mention, but scrupulously defines his particular infirmities. These schools, gentlemen, are in some sort patients of yours. Their usefulness and thrift, therefore, having been indicated in general terms, it remains to present their disorders in detail. Those are few, and of high importance. The first and most serious of them is a want of school room. This insufficiency is severely felt among the primary departments, and equally in the northern and the southern sections of the city. It has existed a long time, and within three or four years has increased with extreme rapidity. There is scarcely a primary school in Newport having accommodations at all adequate for comfort or convenience. An average of nearly sixty children are usually gathered in one low, narrow apartment, which no care can render attractive, and no art properly ventilate. In a majority of cases, the rooms were not originally designed for their present use; are not owned by the city, but are hired because nothing better can be had. To coop a child of tender age, for more than five hours each day, under irksome but indispensable restraint, in a crowded, cheerless, and confined place, is, at least, a direct transgression of the fundamental laws of health, and a fine way, as experience fully proves, to inspire such disgust of the bare names of school and instruction as will cling to the mind until youth and its opportunities have passed away. What the committee fear is, that with these imperfect means, they plant the seed of future education for infant children, at an alarming sacrifice of physical well being and happiness; that, while inciting them in the pursuit of knowledge, they weaken their hold upon life. What the committee desire is, that your honorable body will give this subject a business-like investigation, and apply those prompt and reasonable measures of relief, which men of good sense always adopt in the management of their personal affairs. Here is a simple statement of the case. There is not sufficient room at the disposal of the committee to *hold*, practically, the great number of little children that clamor for admission in our free schools. The places now occupied are, in general, unfit for school purposes. The primary schools are of primary importance. They are the root of our system of free education. Nourishment and pains bestowed upon

them are of equal advantage to every other grade; neglect of them is equivalent to utter neglect. There is now before your honorable body a memorial asking an appropriation to the end here represented. The paper has lain in your hands, almost unnoticed, for ten months. Your renewed attention to it is respectfully solicited; more, however, with regard to some favorable action in the premises, than to urge strict compliance with the terms of that petition; since, therein, relief is prayed only for a particular locality, when relief is needed alike everywhere. For example, a new primary school is absolutely necessary in the fourth ward. Some tax-payers of that district naturally feel aggrieved at being constrained—as they are—either to send their younger children to remote places, or—as too frequently happens—altogether relinquish their claims upon the public. Great exertions have been made by the committee to supply a deficiency so palpable. Primary scholars have been quartered upon the intermediate department. The neighborhood has been unsuccessfully ransacked to procure a suitable room in an eligible situation. Must this state of things longer endure? If so, the City Council must declare the fact, for, under all the circumstances, such a statement will receive no credence, coming from any other source.

“Truancy is another trouble which calls loudly for a remedy. This evil, although of constant occurrence, does not appear to be widely spread. It is confined, commonly, to particular cases,—children whose faces are well known to the committee; whose names could readily be included here; and who have emphatically earned the unhappy reputation which attends all old offenders. Their number, not large, as has been said, is yet formidable; and persuasion and remonstrance are wasted upon their impenetrable hardihood. Either their parents or the city authorities, and no others, can effectually prevent their continued disobedience. It is vain to look to the former. Your honorable body is therefore advised and requested to take, as soon as possible, the steps provided in the Statutes of the State for putting this misdemeanor under legal correction.

“The present is the appropriate time to mention a matter which has particularly affected the committee during the whole of the past year. In consequence of their last financial report, indicating a moderate balance remaining in the school treasury, the city appropriation was promptly reduced one thousand dollars. That report was made up, apparently, in a lamentable oblivion or forgetfulness of outstanding liabilities. Those unanticipated claimants have gradually come creeping in, and have been satisfied, necessarily, out of diminished resources. It cannot surprise you, after this brief explanation, to learn that the treasury is now not only impoverished, but virtually in arrears, to the full amount of the fictitious surplus erroneously reported a year ago. Close economy, sometimes too close for utility, has been all the time exercised. The result, however, shows a balance in the hands of the treasurer, extremely meagre, when compared with unpaid debts.

"The committee, upon these facts, would not discharge their evident duty, did they not recommend the honorable City Council to restore, to their next appropriation, the sum so recently and unprofitably withdrawn.

"Respectfully,

CHARLES T. BROOKS, Chairman,

FRANCIS B. PECKHAM, Jr., Secretary."

### NORTH PROVIDENCE.

We extract, at length, from the Superintendent's valuable report:—

"It is customary, in a Superintendent's Report, to give the condition of each school separately. By adopting this method, we seldom have any failures; *all* the schools being passably good. If a fair and impartial report of each school should be given to the public, regardless of the feelings of any, it might often discourage those young and enterprising teachers who, through want of experience or some unavoidable misfortune, have failed in accomplishing that amount of good the Superintendent might desire, or the district expect.

"I, therefore, propose to notice the schools of the town collectively, pointing out the merits and demerits of all as they appeared at my various visitations, hoping that if any teacher finds any of his or her faults portrayed in this report, they will try to correct them; and if, on the contrary, they find any meritorious qualities which they do not possess, they will endeavor to adopt them.

"In those schools with which I would find the most fault, whispering, laughing, looking about the room, scraping of feet, and a universal restlessness in the school room, was the general order while the recitations were being heard. This confusion appeared to be more the fault of the teacher than the pupils. If the scholar is sent into the school, and the teacher can find nothing for him to do, he should not be considered an enterprising youth unless he can soon find some employment for himself. If the teachers should keep the minds of their pupils engaged in something useful, they would be surprised to find how easily the disorderly part of their schools would be brought into subjection. Let this course be adopted, and these schools would, in a measure, govern themselves, and the teacher would have but little to do except instruct. They should bear in mind that

'Satan finds some mischief still,  
For idle hands to do.'

Every pupil, however small, should be supplied with a cheap slate, with the frame, if of wood, well covered, on which he could be either copying the

letters of the alphabet, learning to make figures, or practicing the rudiments of drawing. I would not have perfect silence in the school room, or even each pupil striving to maintain silence. The school room should wear a business-like aspect, each pupil attending to his or her employment with as little confusion as possible.

"In some schools, too much time was devoted to some particular recitation which happens to be a favorite study with the teacher, regardless of the real wants of the pupils. If a teacher has a taste for the study of arithmetic, he is apt to devote too much time to this particular branch of education. So with grammar, and the other studies. Each recitation should receive its allotted time. In one or two schools, I found a very great imperfection in the reading classes. The quantity has been as much, and a little more, than any one could ask for; but the quality has not been equal to what we might desire. The object should not be to show how much can be read during the term, but the amount of improvement which may be made. A few well selected pieces committed to memory, and rehearsed with care, will very much improve the style of reading.

"All the pupils who are able to write at all, should be required to write compositions. This not only teaches them the correct use of the English language, by selecting well chosen words and phrases, but, at the same time, gives them practical examples in orthography and punctuation. There is, perhaps, no branch of one's education more open to criticism than written communications.

"It gives me much pleasure to be able to say that these faults which I here point out are the exception to the general rule. All the teachers, with these few exceptions, deserve our highest approbation for the success which has rewarded their labors during the past year. It cannot be denied by any one who is acquainted with the schools of our town, that they will not suffer by comparison with any of the same grade in the State.

"I will give what I consider to be a fair description of some of our best schools. In the Primary Departments, I find care taken that every letter is given its proper sound, each word is pronounced correctly, and the pupils required to understand thoroughly what they are reading. Each pupil, however small, has some employment which amuses, and at the same time instructs, him. In these departments is laid a substantial *foundation* for a useful education.

"In the other departments there is the same order and regularity. The recitations are conducted in such a thorough manner that the pupils understand every principle which the classes to which they belong have passed. When they leave these schools they are thoroughly prepared for any of the common duties of life.

"I would not leave this subject without saying a word or two upon the moral qualifications of teachers. There is no person who has so much influ-

ence for good or for evil as the teacher. The youthful mind is at all times seeking a pattern and a guide—some standard by which they can measure their acts; and to whom, next to the parent, do they so readily turn as to their instructor? One look or one gesture may so affect the youthful mind that the impress will last through all eternity. How important, then, that the example of the teacher be such that the pupil may imitate every act without being injured thereby. Let the young man go forth into the world, and there are no times which he dwells upon with so much pleasure as his school-boy days. Next to his parents, there is no person whom he remembers with greater love and veneration than his faithful and devoted instructor. Wherever his lot may be cast, there is no spot on earth so dear to him as the old familiar play-ground. The brooks, the meadows, and the landscape, are all graven upon his memory. Every act of his teacher, in imagination is often brought vividly before him, showing that time can never erase those early impressions.

#### PARENTS.

“I suppose the parents would feel slighted if I did not notice them, as well as the teachers and pupils. I have been pained, on inspecting the teacher's register, to find so few visits had been made to the school. Is it possible that the parent takes no more interest in the welfare of his child than the record of his visits would seem to indicate? Is it true that the parent has wholly yielded the supervision of the mental training of his child to a stranger? Yet, from all the evidence which I have been able to obtain upon this subject, such would seem to be the fact.

“It is sad to reflect that the farmer who would not think of leaving his colts or his calves to the charge of a servant, without looking after their condition as often as once or twice during each week, never goes to the school room to witness the growth and expansion of the intellect of his own child, under the charge and tuition of another. The mechanic watches with admiration the working of a new machine, of which he claims to be the inventor, thinking of it by day and dreaming of it by night, yet, comparatively, takes no interest in the workings of that mind which has received its existence from him.

Does he say he has no time to visit the teacher and the school? and if he had time, his means of knowledge are not sufficient to enable him to ascertain whether the teacher is doing well or not? Then I would say to him, make time by taking a little less sleep and recreation; and if he knows nothing about the workings of the common school, then there is the greater necessity of his going *often*. Every day will not hurt him, even if he takes his place on the same seat with the pupils. If he only *goes* into the school but for a few minutes, his child will be encouraged by his presence, for from that moment he knows his parent is taking an interest in his progress. The

parent should not only do this, but at night, when his child comes home from school, he should be informed of his progress during the day, encourage him in his studies, and ask him of his standing in his class at the end of each week. He should not give his child to understand that the only branch of education which he is interested in is that rule of arithmetic which treats of interest at eight per cent. per annum. The parent should impress upon the mind of his child that a well cultivated intellect and a spotless character are more to be prized than all the gold California could produce.

#### IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE.

"One of the greatest impediments I find to the progress of our schools is irregular attendance. I often ask myself,—Can anything be done to remedy this evil? and if so, what? As yet I can find no answer to these interrogatories. I have often thought, if I only had time, I would go to each parent and guardian, and lay the subject before them personally, and strive to impress upon their minds the necessity of having every pupil in his seat during each day of the term; the duty of his being present when the school opens in the morning, and when it closes at night.

"If a child can attend school but two or three months during the year, he receives much more benefit by attending steadily during that time, and then wholly withdrawing from the school, than by taking six months of irregular attendance to obtain only three of schooling. If a pupil attends school one day and absents himself the next, he not only injures himself, but at the same time retards the progress of the pupils in all the classes which are unfortunate enough to have him for a member. The class must either wait till he makes up the lost day, or they must go on with one pupil who but imperfectly understands what he is reciting, for reason of having neglected some of the first steps which explain the principles which he now but indifferently understands. In this case, the teacher must take the time that belongs to the whole class in order to bestow his attention upon one delinquent scholar, thus depriving the others of his services.

"If the parent has the right to rear his child in ignorance, he has no right thus to deprive others of that priceless boon which the State has endeavored to bestow upon them. I would lay this subject before you, gentlemen, asking that some plan may be adopted by which a more regular attendance may be obtained. It has been one of my greatest efforts, while visiting the various schools, to impress upon the minds of the pupils the necessity of regular attendance. I have flattered myself that in many instances there has been a marked improvement, though not, by any means, such a reformation as I would desire to see.

#### CHANGE OF TEACHERS.

"One of the evils which very much retard the progress of our schools is

the frequent change of teachers. In about one-third of all our schools, the teachers have been changed during the past year. In many districts, as soon as the teacher becomes acquainted with the ways and customs of his pupils, and they become accustomed to his manner of teaching, the school becomes vacant, and the vacancy is filled by a stranger. This evil may be attributed, in no small degree, to the salary which is paid; the teachers only accepting these places until they can get more desirable situations. Many of these vacancies have been supplied by experienced and well qualified teachers, a number of them being the same who have taught in other districts in the town. The services of several very good teachers have been lost to the town, and the vacancies thus caused supplied by strangers, who have not occupied their present places long enough for me to ascertain their capacities for teaching. One excellent teacher closes her labors in the school in which she has accomplished much good, because the Trustees thought they could not afford to pay fifty cents more per week, making her wages equal to the teachers of the same grade in the other districts of the town.

"JAMES C. COLLINS,  
"Sup't of Public Schools of the Town."

### SMITHFIELD.

The following "remarks and suggestions" are taken from the report of the very efficient committee of the town:—

"A general prosperity has marked the history of the schools of the town during the past year. The committee do not often meet with so few difficulties in one year, as in that just closed. It cannot be said every district has attained that success in its schools which was expected; but a large majority have gained results grateful to the committee and to the friends of the respective districts. In a very few schools, a failure has occurred, or the progress has not equalled the expectation, from the unforeseen inadequacy of the teacher, or from an unfortunate spirit among the district residents. The committee have learned that a teacher who has been carefully examined and authorized to take a school, may subsequently betray incompetency. And they have also learned, when they have approbated a good teacher, with the elements of success, that he will not succeed if the citizens of the district do not intend he shall. They are continually impressed with this fact, that our best schools exist where all parties co-operate; the supervisors of the schools, the teachers, scholars and parents. \* \* \* \*

"We congratulate the citizens of Smithfield in the success of the school system in their town; and while we believe their liberality will be ready



when increased means are required to aid the schools, we submit to each citizen the following question for practical solution :

“ How much higher can our schools be raised with the existing expenditures and agencies ? Or, can each dollar of appropriation and district taxes be made to accomplish better results than it has in past time ?

“ Let the residents encourage and urge the attendance, at the school, of all the children in their own district ; let them visit the schools, and learn as much as they can of the operation of teachers and scholars. It is a happy custom in some districts, for parents and friends to attend the examinations of the schools ; let this be general.

“ We would hint to the districts to elect those trustees whose competency and disinterested spirit will prove they have a heart and hand in the claims of schools.

“ It is hoped that trustees will not negotiate with teachers unless there is a strong probability these teachers possess the qualifications needful, and are not associated with prior prejudices in the district where they teach. We should be extremely unwilling to embarrass the innocent and the worthy ; but we cannot resist the conviction that trustees should be cautious in engaging teachers because of kindredship to them or to other families of the district. Biases against the teacher may thereby be excited without justification ; therefore, in the general rule, it is wiser not to call out those biases. We know some gentlemen and ladies are as good teachers in their own district and among their relatives, as can be found ; yet, the evidence of this should be very apparent previous to their engagement. Let no person take these remarks as an endorsement of the unnecessary complaints they have made against this class of teachers. The committee would lack fidelity if they did not direct attention to the evils which have befallen a few of the schools by the employment of a son or daughter, a nephew or neice, a cousin or family favorite of the trustees.

“ It may not be improper to remind the trustees of their prerogatives and responsibilities. It is their right and duty to form an estimate of the ability of teachers before the latter have a refusal of schools. Trustees, by inquiry and acquaintance, should forestall the liability of teachers being rejected at their examinations. After they have been approbated, should they prove incompetent, the trustees should measure their own authority in the premises, and not rely too much on the power of the committee to revoke certificates.

“ The annulment of a certificate is a process of law. A full board of the committee must be summoned ; a hearing granted to the complainants and to the teacher ; an unpleasant publicity experienced ; whereas, the trustees, by the conditions of bargain and the courtesies between the employer and employee, can effect often the retirement of the teacher from the school ; and expense, unnecessary detriment to character, and an irritation can be

saved, which could not be by the legal proceedings of the town's committee.

"It is pleasing to know the trustees in the town are studious of the law defining the school system of the State. If any have not a copy of the "Acts relating to Public Schools of Rhode Island, with Remarks and Forms," the committee will furnish them without delay.

"Let teachers increase their zeal with higher aims in their noble calling. The committee, by their arrangement of examinations, have labored to secure the best qualified teachers. It is not their purpose to carry the standard of instruction above the provisions of the town, but to furnish that which the town demands, and as far as in them lies, make the capital invested in education return grand dividends, and not allow the appropriations to the schools to become lost stock. Persons intending to teach in town should remember the time and place of the examinations, and be prepared to submit to a test of their scholarship in those branches which they are to teach.

"In December the Board received with regret the resignation of Rev. F. J. Warner as one of the committee of the town. Mr. Warner's connection with the schools of this town has proved him a devoted and accomplished friend of education. The committee filled the vacancy by the election of W. H. Seagrave, Esq., of Slatersville.

H. W. KING,	} Committee."
J. G. RICHARDSON,	
W. H. SEAGRAVE,	

## WARWICK.

The following truthful remarks are taken from the Superintendent's report:—

"To educate the young is a great work. All that passes for education is not such. 'He is the best educated man who is the most of a man ; and he is the best able to accomplish the ends of life. A fully developed man must have his physical powers well trained, his passions and emotions under perfect control, and his intellectual and spiritual nature in vigorous and healthful exercise.'—[Tyler.] Education, in too many cases, is the absence of all these great principles. A little painting, a little music, and a little of nothing useful, and the education is finished. The mind, the heart, the life are things which are principally forgotten. If there were no district schools, it is doubtful whether these things would be thought of as parts of men. Thence our common schools must be made as practicable as possible. If these can be kept healthy, we may yet hope for sound education. It is hoped that parents will give attention to this matter. 'Seek for your children. in

order—first, moral excellence ; second, intellectual improvement ; third, physical well-being ; last of all, worldly thrift and prosperity.'—[Everts.]

" A book education is one of our faults. Teachers have not sufficient time to do all things thoroughly, because of the amount of labor required of them in our district schools. In too many instances, no practical use is made of the studies pursued. The recitations are good. But the scholar asks in vain, of what use will this or that study be to me? All branches of useful education may be shown to have a bearing upon the duties of life ; and, if the scholar is taught to see this, his energies will be enlisted in study. Children are not parrots, but embryo men and women. Their future duties should be told them, and the benefits of the studies which they are now trying to secure, should be shown them, and if practicable, should be illustrated. It may be said that teachers do not feel prepared to perform the task. A teacher of several years' experience said, " There are few well qualified teachers." His words are too true. A boy or girl attempts to teach. What do they know of teaching? Teaching should be well paid, but the teachers should be well qualified.

" Exhibitions, as they have been conducted in years past, have not prepared the way to a superior education. They have guided steadily to the theatre. Can any parent encourage his child to attend theatrical amusements? Authority, higher than ours, uses the following words :—' We must not rest satisfied with a general impression that our schools are in a very satisfactory condition. There is danger that showy accomplishments, such as declamation and English composition, often prematurely attempted, and dramatic exhibitions, which seem to me wholly out of place at school, will occupy the time and the thoughts of teachers and pupils, to the neglect of thorough instruction in reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, geography, history and Christian morality, and other branches of a solid English education.'—[E. Everett.]

" As you, gentlemen, have desired the exhibitions to be suppressed, we informed the teachers, and they have cheerfully complied with your wishes. Exhibitions, however, and examinations mean different things. The sense of the former has already been given. The import of the latter is well known. Your Superintendent is of opinion that one day in a year, spent in bringing all your schools together, and then each school presenting some one or more of their classes, for examination, teachers, by comparison, would learn new modes of teaching, and would be excited to improvement. Whether such an examination shall be, or not, we leave with you, and shall submit to your judgment.

\* \* \* \* \*

" An experienced teacher knows how difficult it is to govern small children, in the latter part of the day. It is at war with physiology and common sense to confine children six hours a day in a school house. Young cattle

are allowed to roam in the pasture, but the young of man must be pent up six hours a day in the confined air of a school house. This article is not written to propose a plan opposite to that which the law has decreed, but to protest against confining children within the school house for so long a time. It is contrary to the child's well being. So long as it continues, 'sit still or stand up,' will continue to be the language of teachers. If young scholars could be dismissed at the afternoon recess, the closing recitations would be much more effective, to the older scholars. Four hours of schools in the primary department is enough.

"The children sing in about one-half of your schools. We regret much that any school is without its soothing power.

B. PHELON, Superintendent."

### TIVERTON.

*Truth* characterizes the following excellent and much needed remark of the committee in their report:—

"Your committee are aware that the most important business of the town has been committed to their charge. The educational interest is paramount to all others. The position, the respectability, the honor, the peace, and the happiness of the town depends very much upon the mental and moral development of its citizens. Ignorance is the precursor to poverty and crime; but knowledge, coupled with true love to God, is the foundation of industry, righteousness and true prosperity. They who dare to ignore our educational interests, dare to break down the bulwarks of protection so sacredly thrown around our sons and daughters. They assume the responsibility of throwing an enormous tax upon the town, in the shape of pauperism and crime. For money spent in teaching one how to take care of himself, decreases the amount to be spent in taking care of him; and that which is spent in fortifying the mind against crime, decreases the amount spent in its punishment.

"Short-sighted, small and selfish minds stand opposed to popular education; while large, discerning and benevolent minds are ever its true supporters. If we were to decide upon the moral and religious position of a town, we would examine its schools and school houses, and appropriations."

It will be seen that the committee did not shrink from duty, however unpleasant its performance.

"DISTRICT No. 9.—There was no winter school in this district. The reason why there was not a school, was because the district was unwilling to

comply with the reasonable requirements of the committee. The following is the copy of the act passed by your committee :—

“ ‘ Voted, That the Manchester school house, in District No. 9, be condemned, being considered as wholly unfit for the purpose of a school house. Also,

“ ‘ Voted, That the above act take effect on and after the 1st day of January, 1858. Also, that said district be required to furnish a suitable lot, and thoroughly repair the old school house, or build a new one, by the 1st of January, 1859.’

“ We considered this a reasonable and just requirement, and have discovered no consistent reasons for a change of opinion. We were not disposed to be arbitrary in the demand, therefore, left it for the district to judge, whether it would be best to repair or build new. True, your committee were of the opinion, that a new house would be the most economical and satisfactory in the end. The committee have no personal end to gain in the matter, but would look to the good of the rising generation, and the highest interest of the district.

“ If the district built a new one, they could avail themselves of such modern improvements as have proved to be of service to both teacher and scholar. The idea that any school house where the scholars can be jammed in and kept warm by having a *large fire*, will do, is preposterous in the extreme. Take this very school house, and you can mark its defects. At the farther end is one long seat, reaching from one side of the room to the other, and three desks. The end ones, which are fastened to the wall, accommodate two, and the centre ones four, scholars. At once it is seen that one half of the school cannot leave their seats without disturbing the other half. This necessarily adds confusion to the school,—a confusion that the district can remove, by so arranging the desks that each scholar can have access to the teacher, and the teacher to each scholar, without discommoding another. The walls of the school room ought always to be left accessible, so as to be used for charts, maps, engravings and blackboards. But aside from its miserable arrangement, it is a poor old shell, out of repair, as an examination will show. Then, again, it stands in the highway, and destitute of a suitable yard, and is both annoyed by the close proximity to the passing, and annoying to those passing, for children must play in the road, or trespass upon the yards or fields of others. We are sorry to feel necessitated to say so much about this matter, but must do so that all may know why the district have left in the treasury \$81 02, which is forfeited by their neglect.

“ REV. JOSHUA A. STETSON, }  
 ISAAC D. MANCHESTER, } Your  
 ISAAC C. MANCHESTER, } Committee.”

## CHARLESTOWN.

Extracts from the report of its School Committee are valuable for their practical suggestions.

"The number of scholars registered in district No. 1, during the last winter term, was .....				38
No. registered in district No. 2.....				42
"	"	"	3 (no school).	
"	"	"	4.....	20
"	"	"	5.....	34
"	"	"	6.....	26
"	"	"	7.....	27
Carolina joint district .....				18
No. 3 for summer term of 1858.....				8
Making the aggregate No. registered in the town, during the past year, to have been .....				213
Average attendance.....				146

"We suppose this to be nearly equal to the general average attendance, throughout the State; at least, throughout the country portion of it. This fact is highly creditable, when we take into consideration the sparseness of our population, and consequently the large size of most of the districts; and that a considerable portion of the children are compelled to travel one to two miles to reach the school house; and yet we believe that a higher average might be attained. If parents would but realize and act upon the fact, that the success of the public school system and their most personal interests are identical; if they would never permit their children to stay away from school, for any but good and substantial reasons; then might we not advance from an average of two-thirds of the number registered to three-fourths of that number? Let parents consider that when the average attendance in a school is two-thirds of the number registered, one-third must consequently be absent during the whole term; and we think the inference is sustained by the facts that, at least, one-half of *this third* are absent unnecessarily. When a scholar is kept out of school, it not only inflicts injury on that scholar, but upon the whole class to which he belongs; for the class must either be, on his return, put back, that he may take up the subject where he left it, or he must pass over the ground occupied by the class during his absence, and take up the exercise at a point which he has never legitimately reached, and from which he must go forward, grappling with principles into which he has never been systematically initiated; and hence impeding the progress of his classmates at each step. We have thought best to treat this subject at some length, because we believe that its importance is undervalued by parents and

those having the guardianship of children. We are firmly persuaded that a full attendance is of vital importance to the success of the public school system.

“SCHOOL HOUSES AND APPURTENANCES.

“DISTRICT NO. 1.—This house was built before the principles of school architecture were as well understood as at present. It appears to have been substantially built, and of good materials; but the arrangement is not such as the perfection of school architecture at this time demands, and the pecuniary ability of the district so amply warrants.

“DISTRICT NO. 2.—The house in this district is well arranged, and in ordinary condition; and is perhaps, everything considered, the best house in the town.

“Of the school houses in Districts 3 and 4, the committee cannot speak with so much certainty.

“The school house in District No. 5 is well planned and arranged, except that the dimensions are stinted in every part, an objection that applies with more or less force to almost every house in the town, and to very many out of it. We regret to say that there are no out buildings connected with this house, and that the board, that should have been a blackboard, has never been painted. The school house was wretchedly built, both as to materials and work, and will need soon to be thoroughly repaired or rebuilt.

“DISTRICT NO. 6.—This building is owned by proprietors, and is but a poor apology for a school house. We hope the tax-payers of this district will soon consent to tax themselves for the means necessary to erect a convenient, comfortable, and tasteful school house.

“DISTRICT NO. 7.—This house, in the opinion of your committee, is a disgrace to the district. It is small, and badly arranged, and much dilapidated, and this in a district that returns a property valuation of \$50,000. We hope the district will ‘repent and do the first works,’ as regards supplying themselves with a suitable school building, that your committee for 1859 may not have occasion to report their delinquency.

“We take the occasion, in this place, to introduce a few suggestions in reference to building and fitting up school houses. A pleasant and airy, but not exposed situation should, if possible, be selected. The building should be large enough for the present and prospective wants of the district. It should be constructed with broad aisles, and with platform across the end opposite the door, not less than six feet wide.

“The windows should be on only two sides of the school room, as cross lights are always objectionable. There should be always a sink and basin; and in no case can a water pail and cup and broom be dispensed with. There should be plenty of good blackboard, for no qualified teacher will, in these times, consent to teach in a house where this indispensable requisite is not provided.

**"MEANS OF VENTILATION.**

"The most common mode of ventilation, provided expressly for that object, is by lowering the upper sashes of the windows; and we would recommend that every house, not already provided with this simple contrivance, be so fitted before the commencement of the next winter term, as no amount of excellencies, in other respects, will compensate for the want of, or for defective or improper ventilation.

**"A WORD ON COMELINESS.**

"In the opinion of your committee, \$5 could hardly be laid out more economically, than in the purchase of a few rolls of paper and a few pounds of paint. Any ingenious person might apply the latter to the desks, doors and other interior wood work, while the ladies of the district would willingly come out and put on the former. The child that leaves at home a neatly painted, papered and carpeted room, and goes out to pass the day within cold and comfortless and prison-like walls, unpapered, unpainted, begrimed with dirt and smoke, will not be very likely to form a favorable estimate of that institution which should be the pride and boast of the country—its common public schools.

**"A FEW WORDS ON SCHOOL REQUISITES.**

"Every school house should be provided with outline maps, geometrical solids and drawing cards. There is one other article to which we would refer. Geography is a beautiful and elevating study. It is also a useful study. We presume *this* will not be disputed. But what success attends the attempts to teach it, at least so far as the scientific portion of the study is concerned. Let the meagre attainments of most of the pupils in our public schools answer. We do not believe that the *science* of geography can be taught successfully without the use of globes. The time will come—for it must come—when a neat globe will be found upon every school room table. Let some one of the districts take the initiative, and purchase a good 12 or 16 inch globe, and other districts will be sure to follow the example.

**"FUEL.**

"There should be plenty of fuel and of the right kind, including a good stock of dry kindlings; as no teacher should be compelled to plunder the neighbors's fences to supply kindling material for the school room fire. In the opinion of your committee, it is the best way to let a reliable person furnish the wood, and assess a tax upon each scholar attending school, for his or her proportion of the expense. This plan, if properly carried out, will not be likely to fail.

**"FIRES.**

"Fires should be kindled in the school room, during the winter term, as early as eight o'clock in the morning, and a regular arrangement made by



which the larger male scholars engage to perform this duty, and parents should encourage and assist the teacher in carrying out his plans in this respect, as the scholars must, of course, be induced to enter into it voluntarily, and as a matter of accommodation and convenience, and not of authority on the part of the teacher. When no definite arrangement is made to make the fires, at an early hour, many of the smaller children keep themselves, or are kept, away until half-past nine, or ten o'clock, embarrassing the operations of the teacher, and either losing the morning exercise themselves, or retarding that of the class to which they belong; and small and perhaps weakly children that come at an early hour, to a cold and badly ventilated house, too often come it is to be feared to contract colds that ripen into disease, and end not unfrequently in premature death. Teachers do not, as a general thing, pay sufficient attention to the temperature of their school rooms. The fires, we repeat, should be kindled as early as eight o'clock; and when the house is thoroughly warmed, the upper sashes should be lowered; and if the house be warm and the air close, the windows should not be entirely closed at top, unless the weather be very cold or stormy. The aim should be to keep the temperature at about 65 deg., and secure as much of the right kind of ventilation as possible. A thermometer should be put up in every school room. It will cost but fifty cents, and if carefully noted by the teacher, and the temperature of the school room governed accordingly, would prove of inestimable value.

#### " VISITATIONS.

" Trustees and parents should visit the school room. There should not a week pass, during the school term, that the school is not visited by some members of the district. They may evince, in this way, that they feel a deep interest in the success of the school. It too often happens that the school room is the last place that the parent is seen to visit. Is it strange that, under such circumstances, the pupil should have no pleasure in the school room, no love of study, no respect for the teacher or his calling? Parents, visit the school room, and show by your manner and language that you respect the teacher and value his labor. In so doing, you will inspire your children with like sentiments and feelings; and their attention will be gained, their dormant intellects aroused, and the mental machinery will thus be put in motion.

#### " BOOKS AND STUDIES.

" The want of uniformity in the books used in the several schools in the town, is a serious obstacle to success. In one school, during the past winter, no less than five different kinds of arithmetics were used,—we mean arithmetics by five different authors. The same want of uniformity exists with respect to geographies; and in a greater or less degree with respect to other studies. This is all very objectionable and embarrassing. It is a dead weight

on the teacher. It lessens the amount of labor that he can perform one-eighth, one-fourth, one-half, according as the want of uniformity may be greater or less. We respectfully submit that parents and guardians should in all cases confer with the school committee before putting new books into the hands of their children. The wishes of teachers in the matter should by no means be complied with, without the assent of the committee; as we regret to say they are too often the pliant tools of publishers, or incompetent judges of the quality of books. The law has invested the school committee with full power to decide what books shall be used in the schools. And although the committees of this town have never seen fit to exercise this authority, we certainly think that they should be consulted whenever it is proposed to introduce new books into any of the schools.

“A FEW WORDS IN REGARD TO THE COURSE OF STUDY.

“Children should always be learned to spell, and not only to spell, but to spell well. But it is a lamentable fact, that many who present themselves as teachers, and obtain schools too, cannot spell. What shall we expect, then, of their pupils? ‘Can the blind lead the blind?’ Spelling and reading are of primary importance, and should always be taught thoroughly and well.

“WRITING.

“This good old-fashioned accomplishment, we are sorry to say, is falling into unmerited disrepute. We cannot do better here than to quote an extract from a letter of Dr. Kingsbury, the Commissioner of Public Schools. It was written in answer to an inquiry of one of the committee, as to his opinion of the relative advantages of teaching penmanship by engraved copies, as compared with the old method. He says,—‘In regard to penmanship, I am decidedly of the opinion that if teachers know how to write well, the best mode of teaching is for them to write the copies. But how many teachers write well enough for this? Not more than one in ten, or perhaps twenty. Therefore the only alternative for most teachers is to use engraved copies. There is no doubt that this branch is very much neglected at the present day,’ &c.

“Arithmetic is of primary importance, as it enters more intimately into the concerns and business of life than any other branch, reading and writing excepted; and without a knowledge of those branches of course it cannot be taught. There are many children in every community who cannot, or will not, pursue an extended course of studies, and these children should unquestionably obtain a thorough knowledge of mental arithmetic, to the exclusion of geography and grammar. Written arithmetic may then be commenced, (but not till mental arithmetic has been fully mastered,) and with it, if practicable, geography. We do not design to be understood as disparaging the noble science of English grammar. But we do say that much of the time

spent upon English grammar in our schools, is wasted. We speak advisedly, we think, when we assert this. It is unquestionably the case that a large proportion of the children in our schools are put upon the study of grammar, to the exclusion and prejudice of other and more important studies, and pursue it only long enough to learn the definitions and the jargon of conjugations, and then close their grammar books forever. To study grammar in this way, (and this is practically the way that very many do study it,) we believe to be the veriest absurdity. Grammar is not like some other studies. You may take up the study of arithmetic, for instance, and if you only but master the fundamental rules, you have made a valuable acquisition. Not so with grammar. It must be pursued steadily, and vigorously, and long, or all that is gained is lost. But for those who have the time and patience, and determination to study English grammar in the manner we have described, we say, enter upon it by all means.

#### "TEACHERS AND THEIR QUALIFICATIONS.

"Trustees, when about to enter into engagements with teachers, should inform them promptly that the committee will expect and require them to furnish satisfactory certificates of unexceptionable good character, (unless they are personally known to the committee,) and to pass an examination such as the law requires. If they have taught before, inquiry should be made as to their success; as that indescribable quality, tact, or the want of it, cannot always be detected by the shrewdest committee. Literary qualification is indispensable; reason requires it; the law requires it; and no committee should be expected to violate their oaths to gratify the wishes of an incompetent teacher, or the mistaken policy of trustees or school districts. A model teacher should possess a combination of qualities. His literary attainments should be good; whatever he pretends to know, he should know thoroughly. He should possess the faculty of imparting information; in other words, he should be 'apt to teach.' He should be pleasing and gentlemanly in his deportment; he should possess great firmness and ability to govern, united to mildness and pleasantness, and an evident desire to study the happiness of his scholars. He should by no means be a pedant, still less should he be a tyrant. He should love his calling, and evince his respect for it, by earnest and faithful endeavors to succeed in it.

"Of the character of the schools during the past years, or of the fitness of the teachers, we do not propose to speak, as there would be no pleasure in making invidious discriminations, and the course might be one of doubtful propriety. Suffice it to say, that since our public school system was commenced, we think we have been benefited by the labors of some very good and competent teachers; but we think there have been more of a quality which the law does not contemplate. We do not believe that the ultimate design of the law as regards the qualification of teachers, has yet been

reached. Courage, then, friends ; let us all put our shoulders to the work, nor rest from our labors until, in the perfection of our system of common schools, we shall have achieved a noble and a glorious end.

" Fellow citizens, in preparing this report, we have endeavored to speak the truth plainly, ' without favor or hope of reward.' We have ' set down nought in malice ; ' and we have kept back nothing that a sense of our duty has required us to lay before you. We are aware of its imperfections, for the field is large and there are a multitude of facts that, in a greater or less degree, bear upon the subject. These we have not been able to arrange, systematize and digest so fully as we would have preferred.

" Respectfully submitted by

WILLIAM H. PERRY,  
For the Committee."

## GLOCESTER.

From the report of the committee, we take the following excellent and practical remarks. With such a supervising agency as this report represents, this community can but have improved schools :—

### " ORTHOGRAPHY.

" This elementary part of education takes up the *sounds of letters* and their arrangement into words. Perhaps no part of teaching has greater difficulties than causing the scholar to express the different sounds of the language, and spell or write the words correctly. It is painful to go into the schools, and hear the unnatural and screeching sounds, and see so much time thrown away in doing nothing but make the young scholar hate the school room. Many of the teachers themselves are sadly deficient in a correct knowledge or expression of these sounds, and the way to interest the scholar.

" The *first thing* to be done, is to master the most *simple sounds*. Take the most simple word and resolve it into its elementary sounds, making the scholar give each separately ; then unite the sounds again to produce the word ; and so go to more difficult sounds and words, until they are familiar with the simple, vowel and consonant sounds, and before they look into a book.

" Now let the scholar make the *form* of the letters upon the slate or board until these are familiar, that they may know the *characters* that represent the different sounds of the voice.

" After they are familiar with the *forms*, they may then be taught the *names* of the letters, which are quite different from their forms, and should be the last thing and not the first. Let the ear catch the *sound* and the voice

pronounce it with *grace*, the eye see the *form* and the hand make it with ease. Let the small scholars be thus taught in this natural order, until they have mastered the subject, and one-half the time and money would be saved.

#### “ R E A D I N G .

“ If orthography is thoroughly taught, it lays the foundation for correct and effective reading. This subject is miserably taught in many of the schools. Learning to read is only the stupid process of calling words without any natural expression of tones or inflections. All true reading includes two essential ideas, the first is to know the *subject and meaning of the words* of the lesson, so as to be deeply impressed by the *thoughts and feelings* of it ; and then to *convey the thoughts* to the minds of others in appropriate sounds, so as to impress them. Hence, no one can read a piece who has not first *studied* the piece so as to express the meaning, not in the language of the dictionary, but in his own language. In visiting one school, the scholars in a reading class *seemed* to be calling words simply ; and they were asked the meaning of them, but were not able to give it. They were then asked what they were reading about, but not one scholar could tell. The whole term in this school was worse than thrown away. They might as well have been calling over the words of the Chinese language, as to any practical purposes. And yet how few of the scholars ever get the *meaning* of the words and sentences of a piece before they come to read ; or are ever questioned by the teacher, or have the thoughts and images presented to the imagination of the scholar, before he attempts to read it. And if they do not do this, much less can they convey these sentiments to others in proper tones and emphasis, so as to impress them. Indeed, not one-half the teachers themselves, on examination, could tell what *tones* are designed to represent or explain the meaning and use of *emphasis*. This is the reason why reading is so poorly taught, and is the mere work of calling over a dead language. The mind is wholly inactive. It is of the utmost importance to preserve *the freshness and life of the language*, and avoid that *mechanical and disgusting drawl of the school room*, which will call up, as one has expressed it, ‘ that ghost known as the genius of school reading.’ In some of the schools this has been done with good results.

#### G R A M M A R .

Grammar teaches us how to speak and write the English language correctly. It has not, however, been taught in this *practical way*, but rather by the definition of terms and the *parsing of words*, which has created the feeling that it is a dry and useless subject.

This study has been almost entirely neglected in our schools, for this reason, although, for all practical purposes, it is one of the most important.

When we think how much time has been spent in this way, while the

scholars are not able, after years of study, to speak and write correctly, we do not wonder that many are set against it.

The *first thing* is to teach children how to *talk* in the most familiar way, using the most simple and pure language, and guarding against all that is vulgar. All their questions and answers should be expressed in the best and purest words ; and all cant and low phrases, that tend to corrupt a good literary taste and debase the morals, should be at once banished from the school room. The teacher must, in his own practice and by constant labor, strive to elevate the taste and purity of style in the school room, on the play ground, and at all times. In some of the schools this has been done, while in others it is neglected. The *next thing* that requires attention in grammar, is the learning to *write correct English*. One of the first exercises of the primary school, should be the use of the pencil in expressing the simplest ideas. The scholar should *write* the names of *objects* and their various *qualities*, and even their *actions*. In this way, with a proper teacher, they will soon come to write simple sentences with ease and accuracy. Let them write upon such topics as they are interested in, putting their questions often in the form of a note to the teacher, writing letters of business. In this way they will learn to write with as much ease and elegance as they talk, and it will come to be a pleasing exercise. This will do very much to secure accurate thinking, correct spelling, and the use of words and sentences. And as they become acquainted with the *rules of analysis*,—the various elements and uses of a sentence,—let them take up a piece of model writing and analyze its language, and the import of its words ; examine the form of sentences and clauses, and other ways of expressing the same thought. The scholar will thus see in how many ways an idea can be written ; and by following out this practice, they will be led to express their thoughts upon any practical subject in life, with precision, force and beauty.

We had intended to speak of other branches, as *Arithmetic* and *Geography*, but these may receive attention at another time. The committee, however, would say that *arithmetic*, in particular, is much better taught than the subjects already alluded to ; yet there is a sad want of the true method of teaching this study ;—teaching it so that the scholar can merely work out the questions and get the answers, which may give no real knowledge that will be of any avail in business or teaching. But he should be perfect master of every principle, and be able to explain every variety of questions that can be presented under them. There is a sad deficiency in nearly all the schools in this respect. Not one-tenth of the scholars can clearly explain and illustrate the true *nature of numbers*, or the different orders of units in writing them, and which lies at the foundation of this study. And this is not strange, since not one-half of the teachers, on examination, were able to do it. In this way, and with *such teachers*, everything is made superficial :

and the scholars pass over about the same thing term after term, without becoming thoroughly acquainted with any theory. Look at the time spent by most scholars in the school house; time enough, under the instruction of competent teachers, to make most of the scholars acquainted with the elements of nearly all the branches of English science taught in our colleges. This has been done in some schools, where the right sort of teachers have been employed, and why not in our schools? The citizens of this town would not suffer work to be done on the farm, or in the shop, store, bank or factory, as it is done in many of the schools—the *intellectual workshops of this town*.

#### MORAL CULTURE.

Teaching the common branches is not, after all, the most important part of education. In the best culture there must be good manners and correct morals. The training that is a blessing to the community, demands the culture of the *moral sentiments*. And in order to this, the teacher must possess high moral and social qualities, that he may not simply lecture his scholars on the subject, but lead them to the practice of all the social duties they owe to the family, the school and the community. The influence of correct principles and conduct in the teacher, in controlling the passions, and producing courteous and respectful conduct, has a powerful moulding influence upon the scholar. If the teacher is fretful and passionate, all his maxims and good talk will be of no avail. If he is reckless in his conduct out of school, spending his evenings in the bar-room or low dance, or other places of resort, his *words* of virtue will be useless. The scholars will soon lose their respect for him.

The whole character of the teacher should be such as to make the pupils feel a strong impulse to be kind and respectful in their manners, and more elevated and noble in their moral feelings. It is needless to say that it requires not the influence of the teacher to make them passionate, corrupt and debauched, and reckless in their morals, and thus endanger all the interests of society.

In some of the schools, correct deportment and an affectionate and family-like influence has pervaded in the school room, while profaneness, obscenity and other vile and vulgar practices, are being banished from it.

In other schools, there has been a want of a decided moral influence and elevation to mould the character, and the scholars have been left to the downward tendencies of human nature.

#### TO PARENTS.

Permit us to say a word to you, who are entrusted with the responsibility of properly educating those minds committed to your care. The germ of all that is great and noble is there. It is given to you to see that this *intellect*

scholars are not able, after years of study, to speak and write as they should, do not wonder that many are set against it.

The *first thing* is to teach children how to talk in the most simple and pure language, and guarding against cant and vulgar. All their questions and answers should be expressed in the most simple and purest words; and all cant and low phrases, that tend to corrupt literary taste and debase the morals, should be at once banished from the school room. The teacher must, in his own practice and in the practice of his scholars, strive to elevate the taste and purity of style in the school room, and at all times. In some of the schools this has been neglected, in others it is neglected. The *next thing* that requires attention, in a primary school, is the learning to write correct English. One of the first duties of the primary school, should be the use of the pencil in writing the names of objects and the simplest ideas. The scholar should write the names of objects, and their qualities, and even their actions. In this way, with a little practice, he will soon come to write simple sentences with ease and grace, and to write upon such topics as they are interested in, putting them in the form of a note to the teacher, writing letters of introduction, and they will learn to write with as much ease and elegance as they will. This will do very much for the accuracy of their thinking, correct spelling, and the use of words. As they become acquainted with the rules of analysis—of the construction and uses of a sentence.—let them take up a piece of paper, and analyze its language, and the import of its words; sentences and clauses, and other ways of expressing an idea. The scholar will thus see in how many ways an idea can be expressed. Following out this practice, they will be led to express their thoughts on a practical subject in life, with precision, force and beauty.

We had intended to speak of other branches, as *physiology*, but these may receive attention at another time. We would say that *arithmetic*, in particular, is much neglected in our schools, and subjects already alluded to; yet there is a sad want of skill in teaching this study;—teaching it so that the scholar can only repeat the questions and get the answers, which may give him some knowledge, but will be of any avail in business or teaching. But the teacher should enter of every principle, and be able to explain every principle, and every fact can be presented under them. There is a sad deficiency in our schools in this respect. Not one-tenth of the scholars can explain and illustrate the true nature of numbers, or the difference between addition and subtraction, and which lies at the foundation of all arithmetic. It is not strange, since not one-half of the teachers, can do it. In this way, and with such teachers, every



may be expanded, elevated and fitted for happiness : and that its susceptibilities may be rightly directed and controlled. God has given to you bright diamonds, and you are to cut and polish them, that they may shine on high forever. *Make any and every sacrifice, that they may be rightly educated.* Trust them not to bunglers and corrupters of their morals. If you require virtue and skill in your physician, lawyer und minister, seek it above all, in the instructors of your children ; for they will make them love or hate books—become thinkers or machines, elevated or vicious for life, more than any other influence. We would urge you, then, to co-operate in this great work, that you may raise up *men and women, high-minded and daring to do their duty* ; and which would be of more value to the town than all material wealth. “The children are the best estate of any community. The State may abound in resources of iron, silver, lead, gold and precious gems, and in streams that bring power to her mill wheels ; she may have the finest soil,” and richest products of various labor, “yet, if she have not *men*—men possessing free and energetic souls, fiery courage, keen intelligence, and unconquerable wills for right, she will be weak, and without influence and wealth and power.” But if you have the *truly educated men*, they will *bring the gold and gems, and all* that is precious and enduring. See to it, then, that your brightest jewels be cared for.

ORIN F. OTIS,  
THOMAS IRONS.  
JOB OWEN.

### FALL RIVER.

The extract from the Report of the Committee, gives “a word to the wise.”

“This table also shows a great disparity in the cost per scholar, for teaching in the different districts. In the district which presents the lowest cost for this purpose, the highest wages were paid. In this district the schools are graded, and the committee think that the fact just stated is very significant, and should be duly considered by the electors. Will they consent to pay \$1 42 per scholar, for teaching, when it can be done for sixty-seven cents, or even for a less sum? Is it sound policy to continue a system of public instruction which is objectionable in other respects besides increased expense, rather than to adopt modifications which will give the whole community the fullest benefit of our appropriations? It is time that party feelings and local prejudices were laid aside, and that all the friends of education harmonize upon the best plan for conducting this, the most important interest in which we are concerned.

ELIHU GRANT,  
WM. CONNELL, JR., } Committee.  
WM. G. BORDEN.

## EXETER.

Extracts from the Report of the Committee, furnish excellent suggestions, and notice a grievous evil.

“It is impossible for a teacher to secure that uniformity of order and discipline, in a poorly-furnished school room, that he can in a well-regulated one. It is impossible, too, for scholars to make the progress in their studies in such a school room, that they can in a good one, for the reason that they are deprived of many of those conveniences so indispensable to their facility and ease for study. On account, then, of these school houses not being fitted up as they should be, for the purpose they are intended, the citizens of the districts do not receive the full benefit of the school money; and, what is still more deplorable, the children are deprived of a part of their privileges of getting an education.

We must now leave this subject for the serious consideration of the worthy citizens of the town, hoping that what has been said will be cordially received by all.

We have noticed, while viewing the interior parts of the school houses of our town, that the seats and desks of many of them have been badly disfigured with cuts and pencil marks. It is painful to see this mark of youthful destructiveness anywhere; but when we behold it in some of the school houses that have been lately repaired and built, we indeed feel sorry that property which, with expense and care, was put in perfect order and neatness, should so soon wear the degrading representation of destruction and mischief. It is all important that this pernicious habit, so prevalent in schools, should be entirely done away with. Every teacher, at the commencement of his school, should strictly admonish his pupils of the painful influence of such habits; and whenever he finds that any of them are in the habit of defacing their desks or books, or any other property pertaining to the school, it is his duty to stop it at once, and see that it is practiced no more. This habit, though one of the greatest violations of the rules of school, is often least noticed by teachers. We trust that most of the teachers of the past winter guarded against it; and we hope hereafter it may receive the strictest attention of all interested in the schools. Parents should never interfere with the judicious plans of their teacher; but when they are induced to feel that he does not deal justly with their children, it is their duty to seek an opportunity for interview with him when alone, and endeavor to have the difficulty settled; but they should never step beyond the bounds of propriety and justice, and thus abuse and vilify him. Teachers should, if required, explain all their plans and methods in relation to their school; but they should never abandon a judicious plan, and one that is ben-

official to the success and prosperity of the school, because it is not appreciated by all the parents.

E. P. PHILLIPS,  
THOS. A. HALL,  
ROBERT B. RICHMOND, } Committee."

### NORTH KINGSTOWN.

We extract the following judicious recommendations from its report:—

"The committee have hitherto appointed some person to visit and examine the schools, with a stipulated compensation; but for the last year they adopted a new plan, and your town's committee unanimously agreed to visit the schools themselves, and thus save this expense, by each member of the committee taking one or more schools for his particular charge. Accordingly, each school has been visited twice, (as far as has been practicable,) by one or more of the committee. Your committee are happy to state, that the condition of the schools is as good as can reasonably be expected, under existing circumstances. But we cannot, in justice to the trust committed to us, let this opportunity pass without expressing a hope that still more will be done,—that you will open your pockets still wider, and make still more ample provision for the education of that interesting class, whose minds are being trained and fitted for the active duties of life. The necessity for improvement in any system is never so apparent as when its faults are placed before us, and the readiest way to determine upon the removal of those faults, is to bring them up to view occasionally. Hence, it seems proper in this connection, briefly to allude to two or three things seriously detrimental to the prosperity of our public schools.

"And, first, we would recommend that parents take a more active interest in the schools where their children are being trained; that they personally *visit* those nurseries, and learn from ocular observation, what is going on there. An inspection of the school registers has convinced us, that this matter is too much neglected. Not only will such a course put parents in possession of matter important to know, but it will be a prolific source of encouragement to the children.

A. M. THOMAS,  
Chairman of Committee."

## LITTLE COMPTON.

We take from this report, the following just conclusions and a well merited compliment for the Normal School. It is a fair expression of the opinion of nearly all our committees:—

“George Washington said that punctuality was a part of his religion. This is an invaluable trait in the character of any man, especially in that of one laboring to form the minds and habits of the young. It is founded on truth. He who is wanting in punctuality, is not really a man of truth; he may not be entirely trusted; if he promises, you cannot be sure that he will perform. But if his character for punctuality be established, you think of him as a man of energy, order and faithfulness. A lazy man cannot be a punctual man; a man wanting in integrity will not.

“See how want of punctuality affects the cause of education among us. The State pays a large sum annually, that all the children may be educated; but parents do not send their children regularly to school, and when they do send them, they are frequently late, and in some cases without the proper books. In all ways, probably one-third of the money expended for the support of common schools is wasted. But the loss sustained is really much more than this, for education is worth more than money.

“Fellow citizens, when shall we awake to our true interests in this matter? Our schools need attention. Our teachers need encouragement—they need to have the hand and heart of every parent with them, or much of their labor is thrown away. And we need more thoroughly educated teachers. It is not a sufficient qualification for a teacher, that he understands the sciences he attempts to teach. Much depends upon the manner of teaching.

“We have, at great expense to the State, a Normal School, established expressly for the more thorough education of our teachers; and those who have availed themselves of its advantages have been amply rewarded. Should not trustees, in engaging teachers, give a preference to graduates of the Normal School? Should not our own young people, who are looking to the teacher's vocation as a field of labor for themselves, avail themselves of the advantages of such an institution?

EASTON PEABODY,  
Visiting Committee.”

## EAST GREENWICH.

We take the following sensible remarks from the report of the school committee :—

“ In No. 3, the house is by far too small. It will be seen by the returns that this district has, with the exception of No. 1, the largest number of scholars of any school in the town, forty-nine—in the winter school. It will also be seen, in the report of the visiting committee, that the improvement in this school is not in proportion to the efforts of the teacher, or the bright, intelligent appearance of the scholars. This fact is easily accounted for, when we consider that between forty and fifty children, some of them almost adults, are confined six hours a day in a room about fifteen by twenty-five, and eight feet from floor to ceiling, and no means of ventilation but what the imperfections of the building afford. The air in rooms like this will become impure in a very short time ; and it is, no doubt, owing to this circumstance, that the children fail to make that progress in their studies, which, in a room of proper dimensions, might be expected from them. No. 4 now holds that eminent place so long occupied by No. 1. The school house is by far the poorest in the town,—in a bad situation, in bad repair, and bad in everything. The only way in which this district can do justice to itself, and derive full benefit from the money every year apportioned to it, is to build anew in some better place, and this the committee earnestly recommend. No. 5 is better than the last named, but not so good as it might be, nor as it should, situated, as it is, in the best and richest farming district in the town. The building should be moved from its present location, and placed within an enclosure of its own, where the children could have play-room out of the highway, and provided with out-buildings a little more secluded.

JAMES H. ELDREDGE, Clerk.”

To this, the visiting committee adds :—

“ As your committee visited, from time to time, these schools, he became convinced that there are three things which very much detract from the good they are designed to accomplish.

“ First. There needs to be more thoroughness of instruction. It is a mistaken idea, that a scholar is benefited in proportion to the amount passed over, or the size of the book he studies. The scholar should be made to understand what he learns, and should be allowed to proceed no further than this understanding can be acquired. We regard it as one of the great evils in our schools, that children are advanced too fast. They are impatient to

proceed; parents think they are not learning anything if they do not pass over a large amount; and under these pressures, the teacher yields, and the scholar is at the close of the arithmetic before he understands its first rules, and takes the highest reader before he can read properly from the lower one.

"Second. A want of uniformity in books. This has been a great evil in all the schools. We hope, however, that it will soon be removed. The village school *has* secured uniformity, and an effort has been made to bring about a like result in the other districts. We shall not expect to see our schools what they should be, till they are properly classed, and this cannot properly be done while no two scholars have books alike.

"Third. Irregularity in attendance. For this evil we must look to parents for a remedy. If scholars are not in school, it is their fault. It is a fault too of which many are guilty. For almost any, or for no excuse, children are allowed to stay away from school, and to spend in idleness the moments in which they should be acquiring knowledge. We cannot have good schools till this evil is corrected. Cannot something be done to bring the subject before the minds of parents?

S. G. SMITH."

### BARRINGTON.

The recommendation at the close of the report was accepted, and the money voted.

"It is matter of gratulation that the school houses of the town are in a comfortable and respectable condition, and that increasing attention is paid to the selection of competent teachers. Proper regard to these things cannot be too highly commended, for they are among the most essential interests of the people. What is more creditable to the character of a community, than provisions for the good education of its children? and what is more positively beneficial? As there is, accordingly, a degree of improvement already in the state of our schools, let us seek to have it, by all suitable means, more and more decided.

"Parents and guardians can do much to encourage teachers, by favoring punctuality, and the maintenance of good government, and by promoting in their own families a love of learning. \* \* \*

"In conclusion, the committee would earnestly recommend the addition of \$50.00 to the ordinary appropriation for our public schools.

FRANCIS HORTON,  
Superintendent."

## JOHNSTON.

This report reminds us of an important consideration, and offers a merited rebuke.

"The schools have all been visited by some one of the committee during the year, and have been found generally in a good condition. We have found the trustees of the town to be gentlemen interested in the responsibilities entrusted to their care.

"The success of our schools depends, in a great measure, upon these officers, and it should be the object of every school district to appoint such men to the office of trustee as would be most interested in our schools. No school will be an utter failure when there is a prompt and energetic trustee.

"Those persons who find most fault with teachers, trustees and schools, are those who seldom, if ever, visit the schools, and consequently know but little, if anything, for or against them.

"The schools should be visited by all who are interested in them. If this were attended to, there would be less fault and more knowledge gained of the schools and their wants.

"One of the greatest evils in our schools is the irregularity of attendance, which is rather on the increase, as the returns from the several districts show.

ISAAC W. D. PIKE,  
STANTON J. SMITH,  
ISRAEL M. BOWEN."

## BURRILLVILLE.

We take pleasure in presenting, at length, the Report of the School Committee of the town. It is evident that the town has made a judicious selection of men, who are not only disposed to discharge the duties devolving upon them, but who are every way qualified for their important trust.

"In our remarks upon the condition of the respective schools, we have been as brief as propriety would admit, in order to introduce a few general observations, absolutely necessary in this connection.

The school act makes it incumbent upon us to visit each term of school twice,—once within the first two weeks, and again within the last two. These duties require no small amount of time and inconvenience; but they have been discharged, in all cases, when notified by trustees of the commencement and close of school. Besides the performance of these duties

required by law, we have gratuitously visited the schools at other times, and in these visits have aimed to avoid ceremony; to call without previous notice, when least expected, at all times of day, and under all circumstances, that the pupils might not be trained to "show off" to special advantage—prepared to shine with extra light,—and that we might get a correct idea of matters as they actually existed.

We are often invited to attend examinations. Sometimes they fairly represent the condition of things, and sometimes as fairly misrepresent it. Scholars are all in their places, and very orderly; classes are called with admirable precision, and recitations promptly performed, so long as the teacher is at the helm, to put the proper questions; but when we, or any other visitors, presume to make any inquiries, or introduce any subjects with which the pupils have not been forestalled for the particular occasion, we are met with blank silence: they are as mute as dumb bells. We have seen classes pass a tolerable examination *by the teacher*, when, in fact, their mental movements had all been on a declining scale. We have seen a scholar, when sent to the board to perform an example in arithmetic, place the teacher in a very uncomfortable position, by coolly telling her that she had given him the wrong question. We do not wish to be understood, unqualifiedly, to condemn examinations; but we make these remarks to show how deceptive they sometimes are.

A good school, one well trained and properly instructed, will be ready at all times for examination; and we feel confident that we can gain a better idea of the real condition of a school, by a visit of half an hour, made under the circumstances to which we have alluded, than by a visit of three hours, when the scholars have been through a fitting process for the occasion. This course may not always be agreeable to teachers, but those who are well qualified, in every particular, for their sphere, will never fear to let their light shine at all times.

In order to elevate the standard of our schools, we have, during the past year, made higher requirements from teachers than formerly; and in carrying out these requisitions, have been obliged to withhold certificates of approbation from some candidates. Though an unpleasant duty, no committee should shrink from its performance. A candidate who is incompetent, intellectually or morally, has no claim to a certificate; and when refused one, is but justly dealt with. The teacher is the head of the school, and if that be weak, but little good can be expected to result from its precepts or examples. There is neither reason nor justice in wasting the appropriations upon those of questionable acquirements. It is better for a pupil to receive no instruction, than to have his head filled with errors; better to remain as he is, than to progress in the wrong direction. No sensible man will employ an incompetent person to take charge of any branch of business, however trivial; and what more responsible position is there, than the education of



our youth? And why should incompetent persons be encouraged to assume such responsibilities? Let us, then, be particularly cautious in the direction, and guard well the avenues through which our children are to be educated. At best, we shall occasionally come short, and get disappointed in our expectations. A candidate may pass a good examination, and yet be entirely unfit to teach; may lack the ability to impart instruction and interest scholars; may be wanting in the power to govern, and destitute of many other attributes which animate and dignify the profession. Again, he may possess a fair share of the legal requirements, and little of that general knowledge which every teacher ought to possess, to impart to those under his care. He may have good geographical ideas; may be able to construct and analyze a grammatical sentence; have a fair knowledge of arithmetic and history, and write an elegant hand, and yet not know anything of nature about him; may never have taken an observation from the great book of nature, as it is daily spread out before him; know nothing of causes and effects, in the every-day affairs of life; in short, be in possession of less general information than many of his pupils. The services of such a person can never be very efficient. A teacher should be an observing person; one who will appropriate the teachings of nature to the benefit of his scholars, and apply the varied phenomena of the world to their advantage. The rising and setting of the sun, the storm and tempest, sunshine and shower, the changes of seasons, the growth and decay of vegetation, the bird, the leaf, the flower, the fruit, peace, war, health, disease, life, death, physical changes and political events; all have their lessons, and should not pass unheeded. Hence the necessity of an *intelligent* teacher.

Truancy is a lamentable fault in our schools, and one, too, which ought to be remedied, inasmuch as it is in the power of parents and guardians to prevent it. Our table shows a total of 752 in our schools, with an average attendance of only 535. Though an improvement upon many former years, these figures show a condition of things that ought not to exist. Only about seventy per cent. are in actual attendance, and the remaining thirty per cent., added to the few confirmed truants, who never attend school at all, will show that a large proportion of our children do not enjoy the benefits of the school appropriation. Nor does the evil stop here; for these absences not only operate against the absentees, but are seriously detrimental to the progress of all the school when they habitually occur. The serious consequences of irregular attendance upon the school, can be fully appreciated only by those who have witnessed them. As we before remarked, the remedy to this evil is in the hands of parents; and we sincerely hope this reference to the subject will induce them to apply it.

The town, and a very large share of the State appropriations, are now divided equally among all the districts, so that there are only four hundred dollars to be apportioned according to the average attendance of scholars.

\* This arrangement is such that the small districts, in which teachers can be secured at low rates, have schools very much longer than the large ones, where much higher rates have to be paid. We respectfully recommend that one-half the town appropriation be apportioned according to the average attendance of scholars in the several schools.

Most of our school houses are in good repair ; but some of them are badly located, old, inconvenient, and almost unfit for use. Repairs and improvements have been made on some during the last year ; and we hope the good work will go on, till all our houses, not only in the villages, but in the most remote and sparsely populated parts of the town, where but few are to be accommodated, shall be neat, comfortable and commodious ; their internal arrangements so convenient and attractive as to allure and please both child and parent ; their location pleasant, and their surroundings adorned with that taste and beauty, characteristic of New England enterprise. Then will these institutions be an honor to our town and State ; and then, too, will our youth more fully appreciate the interest thus manifested in their education and general welfare.

SAMUEL O. GRIFFIN,  
OLIVER A. INMAN,  
ISAAC STEERE."

#### CUMBERLAND.

The pertinence of many of the remarks upon the topics referred to in the report, inclines me to quote them at length. I would call particular attention to what is said of the *inaccuracy* of many of the returns, and of the *neglect* of punctuality in rendering them.

"It is but justice to the committee to say, that, for the transaction of business, we have, as heretofore, been dependent upon the kindness and sacrificing spirit of *four persons* ; and that if either of these had been absent, we should have failed in securing a quorum. Since it is a fact that, for several years the business has been transacted by the same four or five persons, of the twelve appointed, we would recommend that the number be reduced to five. We believe if this were done, that the transaction of business would be expedited, and the interests of the schools better served ; since, in that case, each member would feel that some responsibility rested upon himself, and consequently, he would inform himself in matters pertaining to the satisfactory discharge of his duties.

It gives the sub-committee pleasure to be again able to speak favorably of the condition of the public schools. In all of them, some progress, and in

many, a *highly commendable* degree of progress, has been made. This is to be attributed to the efforts of those really good teachers whom we have in our schools.

In those other schools, where the progress has not been so marked, the fault has been, in most part, owing to the teachers not possessing the requisite education. By this, I mean that, while they do not always *know what to teach*, more frequently they do not know *how to teach*. This want can be supplied to those who possess the *aptness to teach*, either at our academies and high schools, or at our normal schools; and since our State has kindly established an institution for the purpose of giving instruction in the art of teaching, I would suggest to the officers of districts the propriety of abandoning the costly and unsuccessful experiment of trying to learn beginners how to teach, by placing them at the head of our schools.

Normal schools have every arrangement for accomplishing this purpose, more satisfactorily and at a less cost than can be done in any other way; and trustees only discharge their duties to these institutions, and especially to the schools under their care, when they insist that those inexperienced persons, who present themselves as candidates, should show a certificate of aptness and competency from the principal of some such institution.

I have been betrayed, somewhat, from the course of remark in relation to the condition of our schools, and in returning, I would repeat the fact of their general prosperity. It would, perhaps, seem invidious to particularize any school which has not come up to my just expectations or wishes, since I shall not be able to speak in detail of the schools, as has been done in previous years. And I must also beg your pardon for the very imperfect and unsatisfactory report which I am obliged to present to you, since I am prevented from pursuing the plan which I had proposed, and which would naturally complete the course of remarks contained in my last report.

I am forced to this result *chiefly* by one cause; and that consists in the late reception, and imperfection, of the returns of the trustees.

In one or two instances, I was not present at the close of schools, simply because I could not *afford* to be there. The sum of one dollar, allowed for each half day passed in schools, does not pay for the horse-hire of a person obliged to visit schools, whose average distance from home will exceed six miles.

So long as I made a gratuity of my time, I did not feel called upon to make a greater sacrifice when a visit would unavoidably otherwise interfere with my business; and consequently, at the next meeting of the committee after my election, I tendered my resignation on that ground; as this was not accepted, I continued to discharge the duties of the office, with the understanding that I should do as best I could.

The present mode of remuneration was adopted under the old organization, when the visiting was done by three persons, situated in different parts

of the town ; and was done at the leisure of three persons, rather than at a time specified by law.

The task of the Visiting Committee is neither light nor pleasant ; does not secure hearty thanks and grateful salutations, but rather hard words and censure. And since, under these circumstances, the enthusiasm of the most ardent person will be soon cooled, when, in the discharge of his duties, he is called upon to listen to the repetition of the same elementary principles and definitions, with a realizing sense that he is doing so at a direct expense to himself. I urge that the town ought to make a more honorable remuneration ; a remuneration that, while it will offer no inducement to an unworthy person to undertake the office, will secure a stricter supervision of the schools, and compensate fairly for the time and expense of the person performing the labor.

As the law requires the schools to be visited during the last two weeks of the term, it is but just that at least a fortnight's notice of the close be given to the committee. It frequently happens that four or five schools close upon the same day, and the committee receive only one or two days' notice,—time insufficient for visiting the schools, even if he had no other business to arrange.

I wish to speak a word of the delinquency of the officers, in making the returns. At this time—three days before the time appointed for reading this report—all of the returns have not been received ; and the following statement will show the *condition* and *accuracy* of those received. Some six or seven of the returns were not signed nor certified to by the trustees ; in several, neither the name nor the number of the district was given ; in one or two, the name of the teacher was not given ; in eight, the wages were not stated ; in two or three, the number of scholars was not given ; and in only one or two, out of over thirty returns, is the amount of money expended specified ; and in many of them, neither the year in which the school was kept, the town in which the district was situated, nor the year for which it is certified the money was expended, is given.

Most of these returns I sent back to the trustees, and received them again, corrected only in part. Most of the mistakes in these papers might be avoided, or readily amended, if the trustees would have them prepared, and hand them to the committee on the occasion of his visit at the close of each term, instead of waiting until he writes for them, sometimes in the succeeding April or May, when the teachers are lost sight of, and the registers mislaid.

In order for the committee to make a satisfactory report of the condition of our schools, it is necessary that he should have the prescribed returns (correct in matter and form,) before him a sufficient length of time to enable him to examine them many times, and carefully ; and determine from them and his own observations, what is the present condition of the schools ; what are their wants, and how they are to be best supplied.

"The theory of our system of public schools, I think, is equal to that of any other State or country; but the development of this theory in practice, does not come quite up to the desired standard; and without looking far away for the trouble, or suggesting any very striking remedy for the evil, I will simply hazard the assertion, that the practical value of our schools might be made twenty per cent. higher than at present, if the people would manifest the same interest in them that they do in the other affairs of life.

"Let them show their interest, in one direction, by attending the annual district meetings, and securing the choice of competent and efficient men to manage district affairs; by occasionally presenting themselves in the school room, and thereby encouraging the teachers and scholars; by counselling with the town officer, informing him of the peculiarities and necessities of the district,—matters which he cannot always determine in his visits,—and receiving from him suggestions intended for the promotion of the welfare of the interests in their charge.

"And especially would I suggest, that the trustees confer more frequently and unreservedly with the committee. Indeed, I think it would be a step in advance, if the duty, now devolving upon the trustees, of hiring teachers, were transferred to the hands of some one competent person, having the supervision of the schools. Such a person would, of necessity, be acquainted with a larger and better class of teachers, and would also know the special, as well as general wants of the several districts, and could, consequently, so dispose of teachers as to more successfully meet these demands, and secure a higher and more uniform degree of excellence in the schools, than is reached, under the present arrangements. Since it is not possible to realize any such result at present, I would urge great carefulness upon the trustees in securing teachers. It is our desire to make the schools of as high a grade as possible, and in order to do this, we want teachers of a high order, not only in their literary attainments, but also in their *ability to teach* and to *discipline*.

GEORGE W. JENCKES, Chairman."

#### SCITUATE.

We take the following extracts from the report of the committee. They contain many important suggestions; and though some of the strictures may seem rather *sharp*, we believe they are justified.

"The committee are aware that, while *many* of the more intelligent and public spirited among the parents and guardians of the youth of the town, look forward to the reception and perusal of these school reports, with an

animation evincing their interest in one of the noblest enterprises any parent or guardian can engage in, *i. e.*, the institution of public schools,—*others*, and perhaps by far the larger part, receive them with indifference, and in some instances, with distrust, never giving even a solitary glance at their contents; or if perchance, when nothing else claims their attention, they turn over the pages with a careless hand, the grand object of public schools has to them nought but a misty significance, unrelieved by a single ray of thoughtful solicitude for the public good.

“Thus reports have multiplied upon reports,—‘Pelion upon Ossa,’—the whole town at times deluged with them; suggestions have followed suggestions; improvements of every variety of character have been proposed, and all the changes rung upon good school houses, cheerful school houses, pleasant playing grounds, wall pictures, libraries, school apparatus, good and bad teachers, text-books, parental co-operation and apathy, tardiness and irregularity, *ad infinitum*, and they have fallen upon the attention of the major part of the community, as listlessly as a

‘Thrice told tale on the dull ears of a drowsy man.’

The committee are aware of these facts, and still, in their present report, will bring forward some new propositions and suggestions.

“But it may be asked, why do so, if the major part of the community disregard them?

“The committee reply, that, though the thoughtless and unreflecting majority of our town’s-people *do not* take a proper interest in our public schools, there is a smaller number of individuals, of judicious and far-seeing minds, *who do*, and to whom all *previous* reports have been food for thought, and guides to action,—and to whom all *future* ones, as they come greeting, will be received with a warm welcome. To these individuals is society indebted, for all the good that has been accomplished in the improvement of common schools, and to them are due the highest honors; and who will not say, in view of what has been done in the town of Scituate, for the last fifteen years, in the erecting of edifices for the instruction of youth, and the providing of suitable apparatus for the better elucidation of facts in the different departments of science, and the more frequent visitation of schools, that much, in many ways, has been the result of suggestions thrown out in the annual reports?

“The committee are also aware, that there is a class of some importance,—so far as numbers are concerned,—who look upon the present school laws as inexpedient, and to some extent, oppressive, and assert that legislation is uncalled for to the extent of the present statutes, assuming the general absence of interest on the part of many in the community, as a proof of the existence of a public sentiment in opposition to the school laws as they now stand. Some of these modern Solons declare that the schools have received

positive injury from the attempt to enforce the present statutes relating to them, that they,—the schools, not the individuals themselves,—are retrograding, and are far less efficient and useful than they were fifty years ago.

“ Without attending to the silly caviling of these inveterate croakers, the committee cannot but admit that there are *some* grounds for dissatisfaction on the part of those whose children are in the public schools, from the failure of receiving all the prospective good to which the school laws seemed unequivocally to point. But in reality the fault is in themselves. The laws are eminently republican in spirit, and have their origin and efficiency from the people themselves, and if they fail of accomplishing all anticipated good, the fault is *not alone* in the *agents* who execute, or are appointed to execute, such laws; but more truly belongs to those by whom such agents are appointed. Now, the committee feel assured, that as much has been accomplished for the good of the public schools, within the past year, as has been effected in any one year heretofore, *but they are far* from assuming that as much has been done, as might have been done in the same direction, with such inducements and rewards as might naturally and justly be expected for such services. Comparatively, with what might have been accomplished, the whole direct superintendence of schools, for the last ten or a dozen years, has been but little better than a farce. *A great part* of the money expended for this purpose, within the period named, might as well have been sunk to the bottom of the ocean. The compensation for the past year, for services rendered in the visitation of schools, has fallen short of expenses incurred, to say nothing of time lost, care and fatigue, in the making of nearly a hundred visits. Is it to be expected, that individuals whose time is valuable to themselves, and whose pecuniary means are not ample, will sacrifice both, in the performance of gratuitous services for a wealthy corporation, whose assets are nearly \$2,000,000 ?

“ It is a trite maxim, that where much is given, much will be required or expected, but it is none the less true, in the nature of things, now, than formerly, and the converse is no less true; and if but *little was* expected for the miserly stipend allowed for late services, it is none the less certain, that, though good was done by that small sum, a triple allowance would have produced an hundred-fold more. It is not denied that there are other offices in the gift of the town, where the services are not adequately paid for, but they are for the most part, if where loss of time and expense are incurred, filled by those who have political aspirations, who have party purposes to subserve, and partisan wires to draw. But the power of the school committee is free from subserviency to party dictation and personal aggrandizement. Consequently, individuals who are capable of doing justice to the schools, and fully enforce the laws in their application to them, and thus secure to the public all the benefit to be derived therefrom, cannot be obtained without something near an adequate compensation.

"The committee, therefore, in view of these facts, and believing the laws are eminently beneficent when fully carried out, propose a plan by which they are confident the full operation of the statutes can be realized to the entire satisfaction of all candid and unprejudiced persons ; that is, by the employment of a Superintendent, whose duties shall be as follows, and who shall receive therefor a salary of not less than one hundred dollars :—

"DUTIES OF SUPERINTENDENT.

"1. He shall perform all the duties of a visiting committee, with the additional requirement of spending at least one-half day in the beginning, and one-half day at the ending, of each term of public school, in every district.

"2. He shall, at each visitation, record in a book to be furnished by each district, a statement of the condition and standing of the school visited, suggestions made to teachers, and such other matters as properly belong to his office, said book to be kept by the teacher of said school, and for the purpose of reference.

"3. He shall appoint a teachers' meeting, at or near the beginning of each winter and summer term, for the purpose of suggesting to each, available modes of teaching and managing schools, and for conferences of teachers with each other.

"4. He shall examine all applicants for the situation of teachers, and perform such other duties as properly belong to the examining committee.

"5. He shall confer with the town committee, from time to time, and act upon suggestions brought forward by them, as may seem most useful and expedient.

"The committee also propose, in case the town employ a Superintendent, that all other officers of the school committee perform their services gratuitously ; said committee to be composed of three persons, or one from each school district, as the town may elect.

CHARLES H. FISHER."

BRISTOL.

The following extracts, taken from the report of the committee, hint at the impolicy of reducing appropriations for schools, and convey important information :—

"In consequence of the diminution of the appropriation for popular education, made by the town for the past year, the committee were constrained to reduce the time for keeping the schools, three weeks less than in years past. It was further necessary, to propose to the several teachers a reduction of



ten per cent. from their salaries of the year preceding. This proposition being accepted, the schools have gone on much as heretofore, with the exception of longer vacations. If parents have been tried, by seeing their children run at large, for a longer period than they have deemed essential to their good, it must not be charged to the neglect of the committee. They have done the best they could with the limited means entrusted to their care.

"But may not the salaries of teachers be so reduced as to make a valuable saving in school expenses? On this subject, we can only say, we have done the best we could, in view of the highest benefit of our public schools. It has never been our policy to strike a bargain with the lowest bidder. We view the office of teacher as second to no other in the secular and domestic institutions of the land. In no department connected with society, is incompetency of intellectual and moral attainments fraught with greater mischief. It has been our aim to render the office as permanent as possible, where merit was clearly perceptible. And in order to effect this, in some instances, we have been obliged to advance upon salaries, to retain successful teachers, who have been tempted to leave for higher compensation abroad. No profession, we venture to say, has made such advance in point of compensation, during the ten years past, as that of teaching. The demand has greatly increased. Higher qualifications are required, involving greater expense of time and money on the part of the candidate; and when any one has established a reputation for excellence in governing and instructing, he can hardly fail of obtaining a salary forty or fifty per cent. in advance of what he could have commanded ten or twelve years ago. The exigences of the case have left us no alternative but to increase our teachers' salaries, in some proportion to the price current in other places. There has been, of late, a call for male teachers, where formerly females were in charge. Parents are not satisfied unless all our schools, except the primaries, especially in winter, are under the supervision of masters. The highest salary given to the principal of our high school has been less by \$200, than the sum given to the principal of the public school in Warren. The salaries of our grammar and primary teachers, male and female, it is believed, will be found on comparison with those given in other towns, in the same grade of schools, by no means exorbitant.

"It has been remarked, that considerable sums, in the aggregate, are paid by way of quarterly assessments upon the pupils, on entering school, of which no report is made to the town. On this subject it may be sufficient to remark, that it has long been the custom of the school committee in the South district, to require of each pupil, on entering school, to pay a certain sum that shall be expended in the purchase of books, maps, stationery, fuel and sweeping the school room, for the ensuing term. This sum has been varied in amount, from time to time, according to the exigences of each department. The advantage of this plan is, the saving of expense to each pupil in books,

*et cetera*, purchased at wholesale prices by the Superintendent, and furnished to the schools as each has occasion to use them. The result is, that every scholar has his books at the proper time, and at a less charge than by individual purchase. As a separate account is kept of these assessments, and all expended for the purposes above specified, it has not been thought necessary to lengthen the yearly report by any allusion to the same. It should be remarked, that poor children are exempted from this quarterly tax, according to the discretion of the Superintendent.

"The founders of this town made wise provision for the public instruction of the rising generation, in setting apart certain sections of land, the rents of which should forever accrue to this object. For more than one century and three-quarters, the schoolmaster has been abroad among us. The last twenty years have witnessed a wonderful revival of the educational spirit within the limits of this State. In this good work, this town has taken an active part. From three schools they have increased to eleven; and from three hundred pupils in attendance, they have multiplied to nearly eight hundred.

"During the last ten years, we have had, in the compact portion of the town, a regular system of classification, such as has obtained but in few places in the State. It has greatly facilitated the labor of instruction, furnished a constant stimulus to the pupils in the lower to rise to the higher departments. The result has been, our schools have secured the confidence and the patronage of the people. Few find any occasion to send their children abroad for the purpose of education. Our schools are regarded as fully competent to qualify youths of both sexes for all the common purposes of life. We have come to regard them with conscious pride; they are among the most attractive objects to which we can introduce those who may visit us from abroad. Their known reputation presents inducements for families both from the city and the country to come and settle among us. Can we afford to curtail their power to do good? Can we lop off the topmost branch of this stately and fruitful tree, without greatly inarring its beauty, and sending a blighting influence down even to its roots?

"Our high school has had, since its organization, 286 different pupils. Its influence has been most salutary upon all the lower departments, even to the primary. The committee are unanimous in the opinion that its abolishment for the sake of an annual saving of two hundred and fifty, or at most, five hundred dollars, to the treasury of the town, would be a retrograde movement injurious to our present educational system, disreputable to the intelligence of our citizens, and in utter discordance with the spirit of the times.

"In view of these considerations, the committee beg leave respectfully to suggest the inquiry to their fellow citizens, the freemen of the town, upon whom devolves the responsibility of settling the question, whether, if a curtailment in their current expenses be demanded, the public good does

not require that it should fall somewhere else, than upon their annual appropriation for the cause of popular education.

THOMAS SHEPHARD."

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The deficiency in many of the returns renders it impossible for your Commissioner to be anything more than approximately accurate, in the tables of statistics. This result cannot be avoided until trustees and school committees are more prompt. Perhaps these parties are not wholly to blame. The returns are too cumbersome, and the registers are awkward. Both require remodeling and simplifying. Availing myself of consultation with some of our more intelligent school committees, I propose to do this at an early day. It is proverbial, if too much is required, nothing will be obtained. By far the larger part of the returns were not promptly made, and in only two of them were the footings complete.

The Statistical Tables show a decrease in attendance, from that of last year, consequent upon a return of industrial prosperity. The same cause contributed to diminish the average attendance. The number of scholars, both public and private, in our State, varies from 25,000 to 30,000. Think of the forces concealed in this mighty army of young souls,—rapidly advancing to take our places! They are too vast for our conception! Let us be careful how we neglect or trifle with them.

Of the \$500 appropriated for lectures, (after deducting \$300 paid to the *Schoolmaster*,) only \$25 has been expended. Of the \$300 appropriated for the Institute, \$250 has been expended; and there will probably be a considerable balance of the \$3000 appropriated for the Normal School, remaining unexpended at the close of the present school year.

## SUMMARY.

Amount appropriated from the General Treasury to the several towns .....		\$49,996 82
Town taxes .....	91,284 40	
Registry taxes .....	10,794 39	
Rate bills .....	5,893 46	
Balances from last year .....	4,718 11	
		<hr/>
Total resources .....	\$162,687 18	
Total resources last year...	195,512 74	
Decrease .....	82,825 56	
Amount expended on school houses .....	12,456 73	
Last year .....	43,085 16	
Decrease .....	30,628 43	
Amount voted next year .....	93,795 63	
Amount voted last year .....	91,272 89	
Increase .....	2,522 74	
The number of scholars in summer schools .....		25,576
Reported last year .....	23,682	
Decrease .....	106	
Average attendance .....	18,856	
Reported last year .....	19,240	
Decrease .....	384	
Number of scholars in winter schools .....	26,876	
Number of scholars last year .....	29,081	
Decrease .....	2,205	
Average attendance .....	20,197	
Average attendance last year .....	21,506	
Decrease .....	1,309	

Respectfully submitted,  
J. B. CHAPIN,  
Commissioner of Public Schools.

OFFICE OF COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS, }  
Providence, January, 1860. }



TABLE I.—FINANCIAL STATISTICS.—CONTINUED.

NAMES OF TOWNS.	Amount received from the General Treasury.	Amount of Town Tax.	Registry Tax and other sources.	Rate Bills.	Balance unexpended.	Total from all sources.	Actually expended, exclusive of school houses.	Expended in school houses.	Amount of Tax next year.	State appropriation for next year.
<b>WASHINGTON COUNTY.</b>										
South Kingstown,.....	\$1,777 75	\$743 11	.....	\$328 50	\$124 53	\$2,973 80	.....	\$400 00	\$481 00	\$1,777 75
Westerly,.....	1,168 47	331 64	10 00	.....	.....	1,519 17	.....	482 00	331 64	1,168 47
North Kingstown,.....	1,255 60	450 00	195 50	377 00	453 50	12,731 84	2,825 93	1,100 00	450 00	1,255 60
Exeter,.....	808 52	216 10	41 42	43 00	204 77	1,404 24	1,071 50	192 00	216 10	808 52
Charlestown,.....	519 20	123 50	80 35	52 00	83 30	850 44	.....	.....	123 50	519 20
Hopkinton,.....	1,121 56	327 62	19 76	640 06	.....	2,109 92	2,004 92	131 10	330 00	1,121 56
Richmond,.....	923 48	225 00	90 20	530 12	88 95	1,866 75	1,330 85	.....	300 00	923 48
Totals,.....	\$7,664 56	\$2,417 06	\$455 35	\$1,972 12	\$957 14	\$13,466 25	\$5,457 16	\$2,308 19	\$2,232 33	\$7,664 56
<b>KENT COUNTY.</b>										
Warwick,.....	\$2,338 76	\$1,500 00	\$242 40	.....	\$341 78	\$4,422 94	\$4,113 34	.....	\$1,500 00	\$2,338 76
Coventry,.....	1,540 48	420 50	272 50	115 00	242 75	2,581 23	2,784 84	.....	1,540 88	1,540 48
East Greenwich,.....	739 12	272 41	137 00	45 00	20 00	1,213 53	1,200 00	300 00	400 00	739 12
West Greenwich,.....	791 02	162 35	134 00	55 00	456 81	1,569 21	1,340 50	767 92	162 35	791 02
Totals,.....	\$5,409 38	\$2,355 26	\$785 90	\$215 00	\$1,061 37	\$9,826 91	\$9,238 18	\$1,067 92	\$3,603 23	\$5,409 38
<b>BRISTOL COUNTY.</b>										
Bristol,.....	\$1,275 16	\$3,627 30	\$521 85	\$61 00	.....	\$5,486 00	\$5,500 00	.....	\$3,637 30	\$1,275 16
Warren,.....	609 80	2,500 00	81 08	.....	164 14	3,446 01	3,441 42	.....	2,500 00	609 80
Barrington,.....	205 03	250 00	30 75	156 34	92 00	784 12	687 64	.....	300 00	265 03
Totals,.....	\$2,240 08	\$6,377 30	\$634 58	\$217 91	\$256 14	\$9,726 13	\$9,629 06	.....	\$6,437 30	\$2,240 08
<b>RECAPITULATION BY COUNTIES.</b>										
Providence County,.....	\$27,716 03	\$67,749 69	\$8,062 08	\$1,810 21	\$2,443 46	\$107,852 97	\$101,364 53	\$3,488 62	\$49,937 68	\$27,716 03
Newport,.....	6,916 15	12,365 00	535 58	1,678 19	.....	21,814 92	22,976 59	5,932 00	12,585 00	6,916 15
Washington,.....	7,664 58	2,417 06	453 35	1,972 12	957 14	13,466 25	8,457 16	2,308 19	2,232 33	7,664 58
Kent,.....	5,409 38	2,355 26	785 90	215 00	1,061 37	9,826 91	9,238 18	1,067 92	3,603 23	5,409 38
Bristol,.....	2,240 08	6,377 30	634 58	217 91	256 14	9,726 13	9,629 06	.....	6,437 30	2,240 08
Totals,.....	\$49,996 82	\$91,284 40	\$10,794 30	\$5,893 40	\$4,718 11	\$162,687 18	\$151,685 52	\$12,456 73	\$49,795 03	\$49,996 82

*Abstract of the Returns of Public Schools in Rhode Island, for the  
year ending April 30th, 1859.*

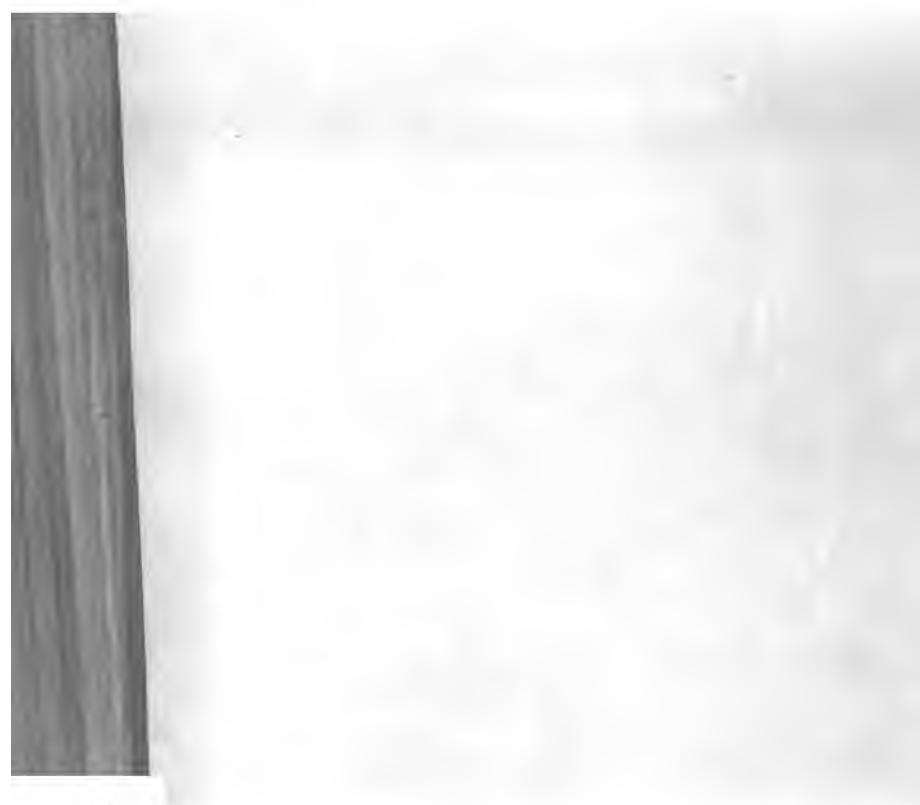
TABLE II. SUMMER SCHOOL STATISTICS.							TABLE III. WINTER SCHOOL STATISTICS.						
NAMES OF TOWNS.	No. of Male Teachers.	No. of Female Teachers.	No. of Boys.	No. of Girls.	Whole No.	Average Attendance.	No. of Male Teachers.	No. of Female Teachers.	No. of Boys.	No. of Girls.	Whole No.	Average Attendance.	
PROVIDENCE COUNTY.													
Providence .....	12	122	...	...	7,141	6,102	12	122	...	...	7,141	6,102	
North Providence.....	6	27	959	975	1,934	1,187	9	21	831	810	1,701	1,271	
Cranston .....	1	21	569	574	1,143	828	2	21	679	579	1,258	771	
Johnston .....	1	12	260	245	505	378	4	10	332	250	582	429	
Scituate .....	2	16	285	317	602	383	15	5	437	317	744	504	
Foster .....	...	16	162	235	395	257	13	4	262	246	508	325	
Gloicester .....	1	13	185	182	367	249	7	4	189	154	343	223	
Burrillville .....	2	14	359	374	733	514	6	10	367	327	694	486	
Smithfield .....	10	37	1286	1238	2,524	1,634	17	30	1310	1158	2,498	1,593	
Cumberland .....	6	22	709	628	1,337	1,000	7	10	718	578	1,296	966	
Totals .....	41	300	4774	4766	16,681	12,532	92	240	5175	4119	16,765	12,880	
NEWPORT COUNTY.													
Jamestown .....	2	2	26	31	57	41	2	0	35	13	48	37	
New Shoreham .....	2	3	134	166	300	229	5	0	166	125	291	202	
Newport .....	3	22	417	443	860	822	3	22	417	443	860	822	
Middletown .....	1	4	59	76	135	82	5	...	95	49	144	67	
Portsmouth .....	2	5	96	108	204	136	5	2	177	55	232	155	
Fall River .....	4	8	347	311	658	431	5	8	327	302	629	409	
Tiverton .....	12	165	209	474	683	262	10	1	216	157	373	310	
Little Compton .....	10	103	129	232	361	159	7	3	162	107	269	209	
Totals .....	12	66	1347	1473	2,820	2,161	42	36	1595	1251	2,846	2,211	
KENT COUNTY.													
Warwick .....	5	8	732	607	1,429	976	5	9	732	607	1,429	976	
Coventry .....	3	11	256	310	566	283	11	5	321	258	579	372	
West Greenwich .....	1	4	65	56	121	84	11	...	172	113	225	199	
East Greenwich .....	...	4	48	66	114	66	5	2	247	168	415	258	
Totals .....	9	27	1101	1129	2,230	1,419	32	15	1472	1236	2,648	1,805	
WASHINGTON COUNTY.													
Exeter .....	2	1	36	33	69	42	9	3	233	127	360	236	
Hopkinton .....	6	5	180	236	415	278	11	1	263	231	484	316	
Westerly .....	12	3	261	185	446	340	12	3	261	185	446	340	
Charlestown .....	1	5	58	83	141	100	5	1	102	83	185	125	
South Kingstown .....	1	20	...	...	818	571	10	10	...	...	818	571	
North Kingstown .....	2	6	128	140	268	171	8	8	371	237	605	419	
Richmond .....	5	4	114	193	307	196	9	4	293	173	376	239	
Totals .....	29	41	786	810	1,611	1,000	64	30	1433	1036	2,469	1,605	
BRISTOL COUNTY.													
Barrington .....	0	3	52	66	118	90	2	1	74	11	118	95	
Warren .....	4	11	239	205	444	341	4	11	242	202	444	341	
Bristol .....	5	11	368	351	719	610	6	11	407	321	728	619	
Totals .....	9	25	659	622	1,281	1,041	12	23	723	567	1,290	1,055	
RECAPITULATION BY COUNTIES.													
Providence County .....	41	300	4774	4766	16,681	12,532	92	240	5175	4119	16,765	12,880	
Kent " .....	9	27	1101	1129	2,230	1,419	32	15	1472	1236	2,648	1,805	
Washington " .....	29	41	786	810	1,611	1,000	64	30	1433	1036	2,469	1,605	
Newport " .....	12	66	1347	1473	2,820	2,161	42	36	1595	1251	2,846	2,211	
Bristol " .....	9	25	659	622	1,281	1,041	12	23	723	567	1,290	1,055	
Totals .....	100	462	8667	8530	25,576	18,557	242	344	10383	8007	26,878	20,191	















JAN 5 - 1933

